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LHASA

Curzon 1904

LHASA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE OF CENTRAL TIBET AND OF THE PROGRESS OF THE MISSION SENT THERE BY THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT IN THE YEAR 1903-4

WRITTEN,
WITH THE HELP OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL PERSONS OF THE MISSION,
BY

PERCEVAL LANDON

Special Correspondent of the 'Times'

85203

πὰρ δ' ἴσαν ὠκεανοῦ τε ῥοὰς καὶ λευκάδα πέτρην
ἠδὲ παρ' ἠελίοιο πύλας καὶ δῆμον ὀνείρων
ἤισαν.

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Vol. I

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I DEDICATE

THIS BOOK

TO

LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

We of the Tibet Mission and its escort were honoured with the conduct of a task which for fascination of interest could hardly be surpassed. Few, if any, of us doubted the wisdom of the great and far-seeing statesman who initiated the enterprise and inspired it throughout. But, whether the policy was wise or unwise, we determined that it should not suffer in the execution. On us, we felt, were fixed the eyes of many millions, not in India alone, nor in England alone, but all over Europe and America also, and in many an Asiatic country besides.

We who work in India know what prestige means. Throughout the expedition we felt that our national honour was at stake, and down to the latest-joined sepoy we bent ourselves to uphold and raise higher the dignity of our Sovereign and the good name of our country: to show that not even the rigours of a Tibetan winter nor the obstinacy and procrastination of the two most stolid nations in the world could deter us from our purpose; above all, to try to effect that purpose without resorting to force. If, as unfortunately proved to be the case, fighting were inevitable, we were determined still to show moderation in the hour of victory, and to let the ignorant Tibetan leaders see that we

would respect them as we demanded they should respect us, and, in place of distrust, to establish a confidence between us which would prove the surest foundation for future relations.

A loss of life was indeed necessitated which every one of us regretted; yet I for one believe that at any rate some good will come to the Tibetans as the result of our work. War does not always mean oppression. Nor does the breaking of the power of a despotic Government mean the down-treading of the people.

From the first the Tibetan peasantry showed goodwill towards us. They were especially anxious to trade —no keener traders could be found. We have, as one result, partially freed the people from the terrible incubus of priestly control, and there are unmistakable signs that we left them better disposed towards us after our advance to Lhasa than they were before. Owing to the magnificent behaviour of the troops, the confidence of the people was entirely gained. Villagers and traders thronged to our camps. Soldiers went about unmolested in every part of the Lhasa bazaar. Officers were admitted to the most sacred shrines. Captain O'Connor, my right-hand man in dealing with the Tibetans, was received not only with real ceremony, but with real warmth by the Taşhi Lama at Shigatse. And last, but by no means least, Tibetan wool-merchants are already making arrangements for trading with India.

How all this was effected none can tell better than Mr. Landon. He took the keenest interest in the mysteries of Tibet, and appreciated to the full the wonderful scenery which to my mind was infinitely the most fascinating of all our experiences. I have

not had the advantage of reading the proofs of his book, and I cannot be responsible for any political views which he may have expressed. But I feel confident that no more competent chronicler of what the Tibet Mission saw and did could be found, and we were indeed fortunate in having with us one of his enthusiasm and powers of description.

F. E. YOUNGHUSBAND.

27, *Gilbert Street*,
Grosvenor Square, London.
December 15th, 1904.

Private Seal of the Dalai Lama.

A LETTER TO SIR FRANK YOUNGHUSBAND, K.C.I.E.

MY DEAR COLONEL,—

IT was into the mouth of a British chieftain in the first century that Tacitus put a criticism which has become famous. "Men," protested Calgacus, "are apt to be impressed chiefly by the unknown." In a sense, somewhat different from that in which it was originally intended, this estimate has remained just to the present day. Spread out the map of the world and there before you is proof enough of one of the most marked, most persistent—perhaps also one of the best—characteristics of an Englishman. You are but the latest of a succession of explorers which has no rival in the history of another race. The sturdy trampings of Sir John Mandeville, perhaps also his even more robust imaginings—be it remembered, that without the latter we should not have had the former—have had their successors in unbroken line to the present day. Other nations have had their home-keeping centuries—years in which the needs of commerce or high politics have demanded that they should for a time develop and not explore. But, decade after decade, the English have always had their representatives creeping on a little beyond the margin of the travelled world—men to whom beaten tracks were a burden, men for whom the "free air astir to windward" was inevitably more than the new-found territory, however rich, upon which they were just turning their backs.

Century after century it is the same old story. The instinctive tracks of voyagers in Elizabethan years; the restlessness ashore of merchant 'venturers the moment Blake had won for

them and for us the peaceful occupation of the seas; the lonely dotted lines that drive a thin furrow of knowledge across the blank salt wastes of Australia; the quick evaporation of the mists of African ignorance; above all, the prosaic English placenames of arctic peak and tropical island and anchorage, unrevisited and unknown, except by a shore-line on an Admiralty chart no longer dotted as conjectural—all these have carried on an unconscious tradition; and there is no apology needed for the present story of another English expedition which won its way where all other living men have failed to go.

For us the door was opened, and though it has now again been locked as grimly as before, at least for many months we have lived in the very heart of the real Tibet. The course of our expedition lay through no deserted wastes of sand, through which a stealthy or disguised European creeps painfully from water-hole to water-hole, avoiding the least sign of man or human habitation, learning little and caring to learn less of the people from whose notice he was shrinking. We have moved through the only populous and politically important districts of the country, we have made our stay in the centres of Tibetan life, and of necessity we were brought into immediate contact with that mysterious government and religion upon which no other European transgressor into the forbidden land has been able to throw the light of personal knowledge. It has been but a passing chance, but perhaps for that very reason the more interest attaches to the simplest account of men and places upon which the curtain has again impenetrably fallen.

Yes, the chance has been a great one, but there is a touch of regret in our ability to use it. One cannot forget that the network of baffled explorers' routes which circumnavigate and sheer painfully off from Lhasa, represents the last of the greater explorations possible on this earth. The barriers that guard the pole are of nature's making only. It is not endurance only, or even chiefly, that has attracted us in the past, but for the future there will be little else for our explorer to fight. The hostility of man, which has added a spice of interest to all exploration hitherto, will never again whet the ambition of a voyager to an undiscovered land.

That the last country to be discovered by the civilised world should be one which has few rivals in its religious interests and importance, fewer still in the isolated development of its national characteristics, and none in its unique government and policy is a fitting close to the pioneer work of civilisation; that the English, who have long been faithful servants of that restlessness on which all progress is based, should have done the work, is not unjust; and that you, my dear Younghusband, should have been chosen to lead this rear-guard of exploration was for all concerned a good deal more than fortunate. In these pages I do not intend to praise, or indeed lay greater stress upon your work, or that of others, than such as the bare narrative may of itself suggest from time to time, but I am none the less aware of the debt which this country owes to your quiet constancy and determination.

Sincerely yours,

PERCEVAL LANDON.

5, *Pall Mall Place, London.*
January 1*st*, 1905.

AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

WRITERS on Tibet have acquired an unenviable reputation for concealing their indebtedness to other workers in the same field; I take this opportunity of saying that it would be difficult for me to set down the full number of those to whom I am indebted for help in writing these two volumes. Besides the authors of all books on the subject, I am glad to think that there is hardly a man on the expedition who, consciously or not, has not added his tale of help to the book, and will not recognise lurking in some phrase or footnote a fact which could only have been given

me by himself. Some, however, I must single out for my especial thanks, and in mentioning these, I trust that I may not be regarded as ungrateful by those whose names I am compelled to omit. The actual writer of such a book as this is among the last to whom a reader should feel gratitude.

To Sir Francis Younghusband, to Lord Curzon, and to Captain W. F. T. O'Connor, to Captain H. J. Walton, Lord Ampthill and the late Major Bretherton, to Mr. Claude White, Lt.-Col. L. A. Waddell, Col. Sir James R. L. Macdonald, Captain C. H. D. Ryder and Captain H. M. Cowie, to Mr. E. C. Wilton, Lt.-Cols. Iggulden and Beynon, Mr. H. H. Hayden, and to Majors Sheppard and Ottley, my obligations throughout the following pages are continual and, I hope, obvious. Less patent, but almost equally indispensable for any success, has been the help I have received from Mr. L. Dane, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, Mr. Filson Young, Mr. Herbert Blackett, Mr. A. W. Paul, and Mr. Valentine Chirol. Last, but in an especial way, I wish to thank Countess Helena Gleichen for the real value and interest she has added to the book by her coloured plates. With the exception of two photographs—those of the Jelep and of Gnathong, kindly given me by Captain D. H. Drake Brockman—the remainder of the illustrations are my own.* In the event of any obscurity or the need of an explanation, the reader should consult the index, which has been prepared with unusual care. I should be glad to receive any additional information, notes or criticisms, as I hope to make of "Lhasa" a work of Tibetan reference, and, in any future edition, shall carefully revise the book up to date.

* So far as my attempts at colour are concerned, I should like at once to refer the reader to my apologia on p. 373 (vol. i.) and p. 253 (vol. ii.). At the last moment I am glad to acknowledge the kind permission which Messrs. Johnston and Hoffmann have given me to use three of the photographs taken by Mr. Claude White.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Early History and Visitors of Tibet	1
II.	The Rise and Progress of the Tibetan Question	26
III.	The Starting Place of the Expedition	54
IV.	The Chumbi Valley	95
V.	The Disaster at Guru	136
VI.	The Advance to Gyantse	157
VII.	Arrival at Gyantse	193
VIII.	The Fight at the Karo la	245
IX.	The Night Attack on the Mission	279
X.	Life in the Besieged Post	326
XI.	Superstition: Manners and Customs: Art	347

Appendix	A	391
„	B	411
„	C	413

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOLUME I.

	PAGE
Lord Curzon	*Frontispiece*
English fowling-piece	15
Wall at Yatung	36
Looking West from Kamba jong	40
Gnathong	47
The Jelep la	49
A tributary of the Rang-po	61
On the Rong-Li (*photogravure*)	*facing page* 62
A bridge over the Rong-ni	63
On the Rong-ni	65
The Residency, Gangtok	67
Rhododendron trees	69
A path through Sikkim	73
Lagyap	75
Between Lagyap and Changu	77
Changu Lake	79
The Summit of Natu la	83
First sight of Tibet	85
On the Yak la road	87
Interior of Kag-ué Monastery	89
Rinchengong bridge	93
Hermit's cell in the rocks	95
Chema Village	97
Chema Village	99
Palace of the Maharajah of Sikkim	101

PAGE

Kata-tsang, or "Crow's Nest" 103
Forest fire 105
Chumbi Valley 109
Chumbi in mid-winter 113
The Tibetan Buddha (*coloured*) . . . *facing page* 114
A printed piece of tissue paper 117
Gautso in Chumbi Valley (*photogravure*) . . *facing page* 118
Ta-Karpo 119
The upper waters of Ammo chu 120
The frozen Ammo chu 121
In Chumbi Valley 122
Frozen waterfall at Dota 123
Susan and Tsering 125
Phari jong *(photogravure)* . . . . . *facing page* 126
Phari jong 127
An old woman of Phari 129
Street scene in Phari 131
On the Glacis of Phari Fort *(photogravure)* . . *facing page* 132
An inhabitant 133
The two Jong-pens of Phari 134
Convoy of yaks in a blizzard *(photogravure)* . *facing page* 136
Tuna 138
Tibetan wall at Hot Springs 139
A conference at Guru 143
Tibetan attendants 145
The Tibetan wall at Hot Springs *(photogravure)* . *facing page* 148
Five minutes before the disaster 149
Line of escaping Tibetans 151
A minute after the disaster 153
Native soldiers firing 155
Captain O'Connor interviews the prisoners 159
The upper reaches of the Nyang chu Valley 165
First tree in Tibet 167
Bridge over the Nyang chu 168
Wall built by Tibetans 169

PAGE

Kang-ma 170
Kang-ma 171
The hot springs of Kang-ma 173
Red Idol Gorge *(photogravure)* . . . . . *facing page* 176
The rock-cut Buddhas 177
The Jong-pen of Gyantse 179
The surrender of Gyantse jong 181
Inside the Mission compound. 185
The gateway of Gyantse jong 194
Gyantse jong (*photogravure*) . . . . . *facing page* 194
The jong at Gyantse 195
The great gateway of Gyantse jong (*coloured*) . . *facing page* 196
Stuffed yaks 197
The main approach to the citadel, Gyantse 199
The altar of the little yellow gompa, Gyantse 201
The kyil-kor of the temple on the jong 202
The inner gateway Gyantse jong 203
Eastern part of Gyantse town 206
A bird's-eye view of Gyantse 207
Inside Monastery, Gyantse 209
The great chorten of Monastery 211
Main entrance to temple 213
The Lha-kang 214
A wall painting 215
View of Monastery 217
A monk of Nyen-de-kyi-buk 219
The sanctuary at Nyen-de-kyi-buk 221
Stone wicket of underground cell 223
Waiting for immurement 227
Fresco on the wall at Dongtse 241
Gobshi (*photogravure*) . . . . . *facing page* 250
The Ra-lung chu Valley 253
Nearing Ra-lung 257
Nichi-kang-sang (24,000 ft.) 259
Nichi-kang-sang 263

PAGE

The Karo la—16,600 ft. above the sea 266
The Glacier on Karo la road 267
During the Karo la fight. 273
Before sunrise on the Karo la (*photogravure*) . . *facing page* 274
The Glacier lake at the Karo la (*photogravure*) . *facing page* 276
Tibetan prisoners 277
"Tim" 278
The mess room at Chang-lo 283
Entrance to Chang-lo 285
Inside the compound at Chang-lo 289
The plain of Gyantse looking S.E. 294
The plain of Gyantse looking S.S.E. 295
Some of the M.I. 297
Traverses of timber Chang-lo 299
Chang-lo 306
Burning houses on Gyantse plain 313
Pala village 315
The great house at Pala 319
Gyantse jong, from Chang-lo bridge (*coloured*) . . *facing page* 322
Pala: putting the village into a state of defence 323
The Quarter-deck at Chang-lo 329
Inside Chang-lo post 337
Covered way between Chang-lo and Pala. 341
Iris plantation Chang-lo 342
Looking westwards from Gyantse 344
The iris wood at Gyantse (*photogravure*). . . *facing page* 344
Tibetan house-charm 353
A Tibetan Sanctuary (*photogravure*) . . . *facing page* 358
A Tibetan "Tang-ka" (*coloured*) . . . *facing page* 370
Tibetan jewellery (*coloured*) . . . . . *facing page* 376
Articles in the possession of the late Regent of Tibet . . . 377
A chorten of silver 379
Tibetan women washing 382
Woman labour 383
Tibetan children 385

PAGE
Tibetan stag 396
Six-pointed stag-horn 399
A pack yak 400
Ploughing yaks 405

MAPS.

Map of Tibet, dated 1680 7
The Jesuit Map 11
Turner's Map, 1783 19
Karo la Map . . . . . *facing page* 270
Map of the Post at Gyantse 300

Great Seal of the Dalai Lama.

Gyantse jong.

THIS IS A VIEW OF THE FORT FROM WHICH WE WERE DAILY BOMBARDED FOR TWO MONTHS AT A RANGE OF 1,350 YARDS. "WILLIAM," THE BIG JINGAL, HAS JUST BEEN FIRED, AND THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN BEFORE HIS BALL REACHED THE MISSION POST. *Biscuit, dark green, rufous ochre, grey ochre, and hazy blue.*

GYANTSE JONG.

LHASA

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY HISTORY AND VISITORS OF TIBET.

THE earliest historical relic of the Tibetans—like that of many, perhaps of most other races—is a weather-beaten stone, the Do-ring. It stands in the centre of Lhasa, across the courtyard in front of the western doors of the Cathedral or Jo-kang, beneath the famous willow-tree. Like Asoka's pillars on the one hand or the Black Stone of Mukden on the other, it both records a treaty and is the outward symbol of the prosperity of Tibet. One might also add that, like the Omphalos at Delphi or London Stone, it is to the Tibetans not only the centre of their strange shoulder-blade-shaped earth, but, more practical, the goal from which their journeys and stages are reckoned. But the Do-ring is even more than this. The terms of the treaty of 783 A.D., now barely decipherable upon its cup-marked surface, corroborate, in some degree, the legendary history of Tibet so far as it can be found in Chinese chronicles.

This history is not one of great interest, and may be chiefly dismissed as one of continued hostility with China, but of hostility on equal terms. That the result of these border skirmishings was by no means as uniformly satisfactory to China as one might imagine from her version of the events, is clear, for about the year 640 A.D. the King of Tibet, Srong-tsan-

gambo, succeeded in obtaining the hand of a princess of the imperial house of Tang against the will of the emperor and after some years fighting.

The story of this Srong-tsan-gambo is encrusted with inconsistent legend. He appears to have been a devout Buddhist, to have married also a Nepalese princess, to have led an army into India, where, about the year 648, he inflicted a defeat upon the King of Magadha, from which place he carried off the famous image which is to this day the chief and central treasure of the Jo-kang. Another story says that it was presented as a free gift from the Buddhists of Magadha by the hand of the returning Tonmi-Sambhota, a minister whom Srong-tsan-gambo had despatched to India to enquire more perfectly about the Buddhist religion. The legend that this man introduced writing, and his Chinese wife several of the best-known arts of her own country, merely reflects the impetus given to foreign influences in Lhasa by the origin and travels of the two.

Srong-tsan-gambo's grandson, Ti-srong-de-tsan, resumed hostilities with China, and in 763 actually sacked the capital, Changan, or Hsia-Fu. Before that he also had given proof of his Buddhist zeal by inviting the famous Buddhist saint Padma Sambhava to visit his country. This was a more important matter than it then appeared, and was destined to mould indefinitely the future of Tibet; for, apart from his personal influence at the time, this man, known also as Padma Pani or the Guru Rinpoche, founded the Samye monasteries and the Red Cap school in 749, and eventually reappears as the central figure of Lamaism—actually more important than the Buddha himself in its tradition and ritual. And it is his soul, itself a

reincarnation of that of Amitabha, the Bodisat, which is born again both in the person of the Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo, and, vicariously, as Avalokiteswara in the body of the Dalai Lama or Grand Lama of Lhasa also. To this king Ti-srong-de-tsan must be credited more than military skill or religious fervour. It is clear that the position of Tibet as a sacrosanct centre of religion is due to his recognition of the vast importance to Tibet as offering a permanent home to the faith which was being slowly but completely expelled from India at this time. War after war followed his death, and in or about 783 his successor, King Ralpachan, made with the Emperor Tai-tsang the Second the treaty which is engraved upon the Do-ring at Lhasa. It is to be noted that the high-sounding epithets which the contracting parties apply to themselves already reflect the semi-sacred and mystic importance of Tibet.

These dry particulars are necessary in order to understand much of later Lamaism, but the era of important legend closes with the assassination of Lang-darma, the younger brother of Ralpachan, who had ascended the throne in 899. Lang-darma, who had murdered his brother to clear the way for his own succession, is the Buddhist Julian, and the assassination of this persecutor of the faith is still annually observed in Lhasa on the threshold of the Jo-kang, where a fanatic monk achieved his purpose at the cost of his own life. From this date onwards Tibet was divided into a large number of petty principalities, and its history is for many centuries obscure. Lamaism, however, flourished at the expense of the body politic, and in 1038, Atisha or Jo Ji-pal-den again reformed the religion of the country. In 1206 the country was conquered by

the Tartars, and in 1270 Kublai khan recognised the supremacy of the Red Lama of the Sakya monastery as titular ruler of Tibet, an arrangement which lasted until the foundation of the Yellow or Gelukpa sect by Tsong-kapa in the fifteenth century and the final establishment of the re-incarnate hierarchy of Lhasa two hundred years later. But before that momentous *coup d'état*, the first European traveller had entered Tibet, and it is the aim of this chapter rather to give a brief account of the attempts of foreign nations to enter into communication with this hermit country, than to dwell at any length upon its internal history.

Friar Odoric or Ordericus of Pordenone, a Minorite friar, appears to have visited Tibet about the year 1328. He was returning from the east coast of China, by Shen-si, hoping eventually to strike the main European caravan routes through Asia. It seems clear that he never reached Lhasa. Astley dismisses him as "the prince of liars," but some of his notes are good and interesting. He reports of the capital of Tibet that its walls are black and white; that its streets are well paved; that the Buddhist prohibition against the taking of life was strictly observed there; and that the Tibetans of the country districts lived, as now, in black yak-hair tents. The title of the Grand Lama of Sakya he gives as Abassi, in which a reflection of the Latin title of the chief of a monastery may probably be seen.

But from that time there is a blank of many years, at the end of which the present régime was established by Tsong-kapa,* a monk from the then populous region of Koko-nor, far to the north-east of Lhasa. His reformations were sweeping in their scope, and though

* "He of the Onion Land."

at this day the various sects of Lamaism are divided rather by tradition, ritual and costume than by any vital dogmatic schism, the stricter moral code of the Gelukpas or Yellow Caps, Tsong-kapa's sect, is still to be recognised. Before the next European visited Lhasa, the Gelukpas had consolidated their rule, and in 1624, Antonio Andrada, of the Society of Jesus, found the chief power in their hands at Tashi-lhunpo. This missionary was the author of the most widely known description of Tibet until the travels of Turner were issued at the close of the eighteenth century. But it is certain that his acquaintance with the country was limited to the western and northern parts—Lhasa still remained unvisited.

The doctrine of political re-incarnation had now been fully accepted. The first re-incarnation of Amitabha or Manjusri*—the Indian synonyms are conveniently used for the chief personages of the Greater Vehicle of Buddhism—was Gedun-tubpa, Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo, in whom Tsong-kapa recognised the personality of Padma Sambhava. Gedun-tubpa thus founded a series of re-incarnations near Shigatse, of which the successive holders made such good use, that towards the middle of the seventeenth century Na-wang Lob-sang made himself master of Tibet. But he then transferred his capital to Lhasa, accepted the title of Dalai Lama from the Emperor of China,† built the Potala Palace, and, most important of all, discovered that, besides being, as Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo, a re-incarnation of Amitabha, he was also a reappearance of Avalokiteswara. This produced a curious result, for Avalokiteswara was an emanation of Amitabha and,

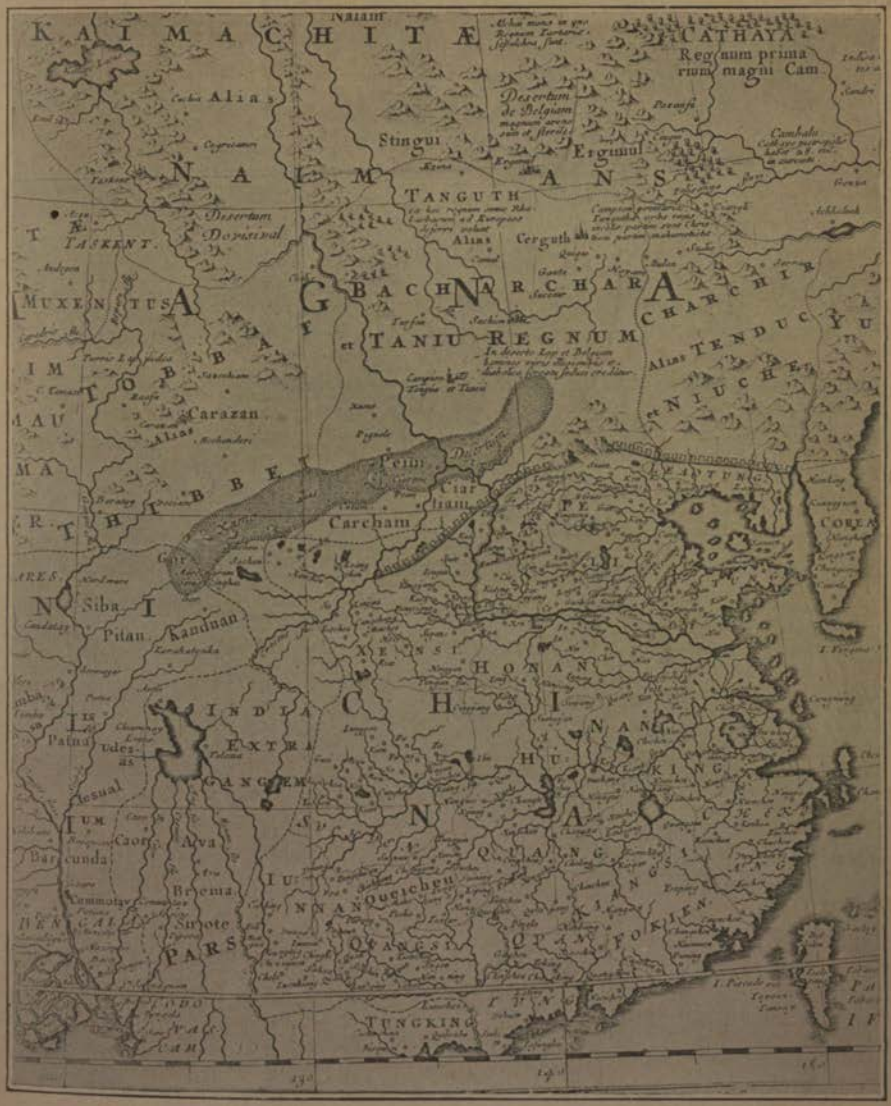
* The Tibetan name is Chenrezig.

† The title means Ocean (of learning). It has originated the perpetual "surname" of Gya tso (expanse of water) for the successive re-incarnations of the Dalai Lama.

therefore, inferior to his "father" as touching his potential manhood. Thus, though the entire political power has been absorbed by the Dalai or Grand Lama of Lhasa, the Tashi Lama—as the Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo is commonly called—remains in theory his senior and superior in spiritual matters. A government, similar in most respects to that which is now established, was afterwards inaugurated, the forcible introduction by the Chinese Emperor of two Ambans or Viceroys with a strong guard being the result of the Dzungarian raid and the occupation of Lhasa in 1717. Chinese suzerainty may be said to date from 1720.

In 1662, in the middle of Na-wang Lob-sang's revolution, the first European, Father Johann Grueber, also a Jesuit, reached Lhasa in company with Father Dorville. He left few records of his travels, but Astley's "Collection of Voyages" contains an abstract of his account of this journey. Lhasa—or as he calls it, Barantola—is described as the capital of the country and the residence of the Buddhist Pope, whose castle "Butala" reminded Grueber much of the architecture of his own fatherland. He asserts that the religion was essentially identical with Christianity, though, as he says, no Christian was ever in the country before. Among other remarks which are true of Tibetans to-day, he mentions the feminine habits of wearing the hair plaited tightly into a number of small cords, of bearing the "patug" or turquoise-studded head-dress, and of smearing the face with kutch.* In 1708 the Capuchin

* Grueber drew a picture of the Potala palace in his day, which is of considerable interest. In its earlier state it must have resembled Gyangtse jong in the disposition, character and stability of its buildings, and it is also clear that the gigantic buttress-building which sweeps sheer up the side of the rock from the plain to the Dalai Lama's own palace covers two deep ravines which are probably converted into secret treasure chambers at this moment. See Appendix C.



I have inserted this 1680 map merely to show the complete ignorance of Tibetan geography that existed before the survey initiated by the Jesuits in the early years of the 18th century. It is possible that "Chiammay Lacus" *may* represent the Yam dok tso. Nothing else corresponds in any way to any known feature of Tibet.

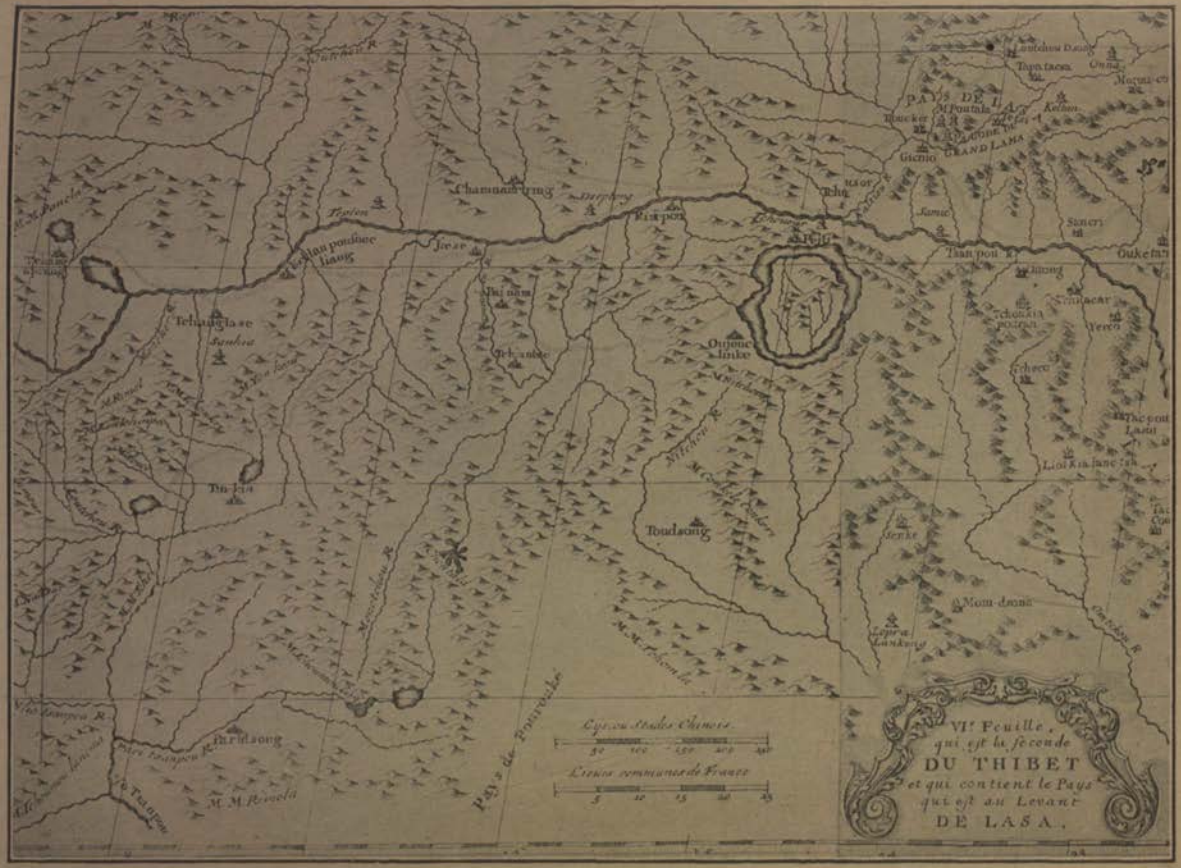
mission in India was pushed forward and four fathers were sent to make a settlement in Lhasa. Elsewhere I have sketched the career of this ill-fated hospice. For the moment it is only necessary to say that it was persecuted by the Jesuits and eventually abandoned in 1745. Brother Orazio della Penna of this mission acquired a perfect knowledge of the Tibetan language. He wrote an account of the country, which is a somewhat bald aggregation of facts and fancies. To him is probably due our knowledge of the mineral wealth of the country, and a certain light upon its internal dissensions during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. His summary of the chief features of Lamaism is coloured by the scholasticism of his own religion.

Hippolito Desideri and Manuel Freyre, Jesuit spies, reached Lhasa in 1716, and stayed there thirteen years, until they were recalled by the Pope. The manuscripts of the former are still unpublished, but, contrary to general belief, they have been thoroughly examined, and full extracts have from time to time been made from them for private use. About this time the famous survey of China was made under the auspices of the Jesuit colony in Peking. So much of it as affects our route is reproduced over the page.

One Samuel Van der Putte was the next visitor. He was a shrewd, adventurous Dutchman, and twice succeeded in making his way to Lhasa. But the anti-foreign prejudices of the Tibetans were fermenting. Van der Putte was obliged to travel between China and India in disguise, and during the whole of his stay in Tibet and China—a period of about twelve years, 1724–1735—was unable to compile any connected narrative owing to the danger which surrounded him. He made

his notes upon slips of paper, and ultimately, in fear lest improper or inaccurate use should be made of them, ordered them in his will to be burnt. He appears also to have kept a small journal which was, it seems, destroyed at the same time. It is difficult to find a parallel to the loss which scientific exploration has suffered by the holocaust of the entire notes of a man who was equally distinguished as a traveller, a linguist, and a scientific expert.

Soon afterwards the names of three Englishmen are conspicuous among those who have explored Tibet. It is, indeed, almost entirely upon their notes that our information as to the interior of Tibet rested until the organisation of the travelling Pundits by the Indian Survey Office comparatively late in the 19th century. Between the years 1774 and 1812 Mr. George Bogle, a young writer of the East India Company, Lieutenant Samuel Turner, and Mr. Thomas Manning—an eccentric mathematician and Oriental scholar—all penetrated with more or less success into this country of mystery. The three men represented different types. Bogle, as his diary shows, was, though a comparatively young man, a peculiarly suitable envoy for the delicate work which Warren Hastings entrusted to him. The Governor himself showed in his dealings with Tibet the same grasp and foresight that characterised his actions in every part of his huge Dependency; he realised the importance of securing friendly relations with a country which seemed at that time to be the most obvious link between Bengal and the rest of Asia. He therefore sent George Bogle, as the accredited agent of the Company, to establish communication, and, if possible, improve the commercial intercourse between the two

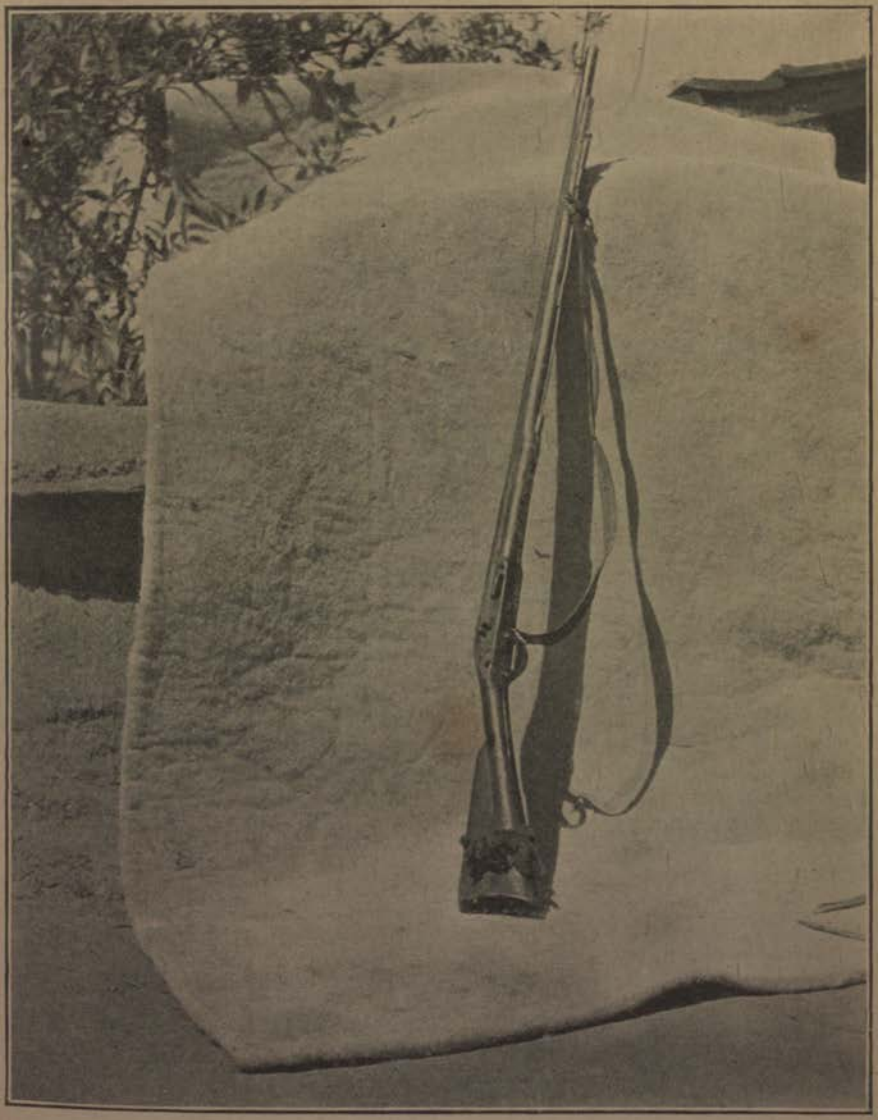


The Jesuit Map.

countries. A thin current of merchandise filtered down over the passes into India, its owners exchanging the musk, wool and turquoises of Tibet for the rice and hardware of India, but it is not likely that Warren Hastings had any very definite intention to open up a thoroughfare to India from the north and east. Many years were needed to consolidate the British rule in Bengal, and he had difficulties enough in India proper to contend with without in any way inviting the interference of outside tribes or nations. It is probable that his chief aim was to secure information. Nothing whatever was known of this particular route between India and Tibet; the very names of the towns, the nature of the country, the disposition of its inhabitants, its products, its government, all were alike unknown, and George Bogle was set a task by Hastings which might well have daunted a diplomatist more experienced than the young and unknown writer 27 years of age. But from first to last he carried through his mission with unfailing tact, and, so far as it was possible, with complete success. His object was not Lhasa. The Dalai Lama was then a boy of 15, and the virtual government of the country lay in the hands of the Tashi Lama. This man, whose name was Jetsun Poldan Yé Shé, has remained the most distinguished figure in all the list of re-incarnate Grand Lamas. He was a man of commanding personality, of wide-minded sympathy and toleration, and remarkable, even beyond the confines of his country, for his courtesy and wisdom. To him, therefore, Bogle was sent, and making his way through Bhutan, he arrived at Tashi-lhunpo without serious delay in December, 1774. His diary and the official report which he sent to Warren Hastings, by that time

appointed first Governor-General of India, contain by far the most judicious description of the life and customs of the inhabitants of this unknown country that has been written. He was received as an honoured guest, and, though, indeed, he was asked not to press his request for permission to visit Lhasa, the favour of the Tashi Lama was sufficient to secure for him unique opportunities of examining the nature, habits and peculiarities of this unknown neighbour across the Himalayas. All that could be done to promote friendly relations between the two countries was cheerfully attempted by the Tashi Lama, but it is clear from Bogle's own account that he met with considerable opposition from the representatives of Lhasa, even in the court of the actual ruler of Tibet, and the death of the Tashi Lama shortly afterwards, combined with the accession to supreme power of the Dalai Lama in 1776, effectually put an end to any hope of an amicable understanding between the two countries. Bogle's narrative will be quoted in the following pages, and it would be difficult to improve on the shrewd insight and steady judgment with which many of the peculiarities of Tibet were unerringly noted down, generally with some characteristic comment, shrewd or satirical.

After the death of the Tashi Lama in 1780, followed within six months by the decease of Bogle himself at Calcutta, and the consequent failure of his intended scheme, Warren Hastings determined to make another attempt. Samuel Turner, his own cousin, was despatched at the head of a small party to Tashi-lhunpo. After some delay in Bhutan he successfully accomplished the journey, travelling over the same route as that which had been taken by Bogle, and reached Tashi-lhunpo



This English fowling-piece, made by Wilson in the year 1768, was almost certainly one of those given as presents by Bogle in 1774. The lock has been removed. It was found at Pala.

on the 22nd of September, 1783. Turner, however, found that the centre of Government had been transferred to Lhasa; the new Tashi Lama was an infant, and the Dalai Lama showed no disposition whatever to allow his visitor even to discuss the object of his mission. After formally congratulating the Tashi-lhunpo hierarchy upon the speedy and successful reincarnation of the deceased primate, he took his leave. On his return to England, Turner embodied the result of his observations in a sumptuously printed volume, illustrated with steel engravings, which for a long time remained the only English printed record of Great Tibet, and we owe a deep debt of gratitude to Sir Clements Markham for having given to the world, in 1875, the somewhat more interesting and reliable account written by Turner's predecessor at the Tashi court.

The third, and last, name of these three, Mr. Manning, presents one of the most curious psychological studies in the whole history of travel. That he was a man eccentric in his habits and tastes throughout his life may be fairly argued from his behaviour during his last years, but it is difficult to reconcile the extraordinary energy, courage and fixity of purpose which enabled him successfully to carry through, at the utmost personal risk, the most dangerous expedition that any man in his day could attempt, with the utter vacuity of the only record which he has left of his great and successful enterprise. It is not too much to say that on no single point did the recent expedition glean a fact or an opinion of the slightest use from the record left by a man who, presumably for the purpose of observation, had travelled over a route to Lhasa which for the most part was identical with that

of 1904. From the first day recorded in his journal, the 7th of September, 1811, to his return to Indian territory, in June of the following year, such notes as these constitute the main bulk of his observations :—

"I came in thoroughly wet and dried my clothes on my body. Afterwards, upon walking across the room, I was seized with a violent palpitation. The insects disturbed me all night.

"I saw a lad gnawing a turnip, and called to him immediately, and, showing it to my conductor, asked the name and told him to give me plenty of it. I thus got an excellent well-dressed stew with turnips."

His account of his own behaviour during the crossing of the Tsang-po is one which most Englishmen would have blushed to recall, far more to incorporate in their record of travel.

"The reminiscences occasioned by the motion of the boat brought on a fit of European activity. I could not sit still, but must climb about, seat myself in various postures on the parapet, and lean over. The master of the boat was alarmed, and sent a steady man to hold me tight. I pointed to the ornamented prow of the boat, and assured them that I could sit there with perfect safety, and to prove to them how commodiously I was seated, bent my head and body down the outside of the boat to the water's edge; but finding, by their renewed instances for me to desist, that I made them uneasy, I went back to my place and seated myself quietly. As the boat drew near shore I meditated jumping over, but was pulled back by the immense weight of my clothes and the clumsiness of my boots. I was

Turner's map of the Phari-Gyantse road, 1783. A very good piece of work—better than the best London maps of 1903.

afraid of jumping short, and having the laugh against me."

The manner in which he permitted his Chinese servant to treat him is a revelation to those who know the East. His only protest against the discourtesy, insubordination, disobedience and, at last, openly-expressed contempt of his Chinese servant, was to fill the pages of his diary day after day, and week after week, with whining complaints of the man's "unkindness." It will hardly be believed that, after he had achieved the end which he had set before him, and at last actually found himself inside the Sacred City, he still occupies himself with petty personal grievances, with long notes upon the treatment which he applied to his patients there, with the effect of his medicines, and with lengthy moral disquisitions upon the underlying influences which affect all human nature alike. Until almost the end of his visit, with the doors of the Jo-kang open to him, he does not seem to have visited a single temple, and when at last he did so he occupied a page of his diary by a petty narration of his servant's incivility and his own silly conduct; of the temples visited he left no description whatever, and the only clear thing is that the Jo-kang was not one of them. Manning returned to England after this great expedition and lived a life of seclusion, and, it must be confessed, of eccentricity. Sir Clements Markham has published the diary to which reference has been made, and it certainly possesses a very remarkable interest, if not as a record of observation, at least as a psychological document which has probably no parallel in the world.

With one exception the record of Tibetan travel from that day to the present year is, so far as Europeans

are concerned, a record of interesting and picturesque failure. That exception was the visit of two Jesuit Fathers, Evariste Huc and Joseph Gabet. Travelling by the south-western route from China, through Sining, these two adventurous priests reached Lhasa in January, 1846. After a stay of less than seven weeks they were expelled by the Amban, and returned to China by the eastern route through Tachienlu. The book which Huc wrote upon his travels in Eastern Asia is fluent and vivacious, and the picture which he draws of his own experiences in Lhasa is graphic and true; but of the natural and architectural features he says almost nothing, and there was wanting in him a realisation of the intense importance, as well as interest, of his travels. It is true that many of his statements, which at the time were received with undisguised incredulity, have since received corroboration from later travellers, but Huc cannot be said to have added very much to our scientific knowledge of the countries through which he passed, and, though his narrative possesses a racy charm of its own which will always make it a popular classic in the history of missionary effort, it is greatly to be regretted that he did not use his unique opportunities in a steadier and better informed record of the national and physical peculiarities of this almost virgin country.

As has been said, the record of all other travel to Lhasa has been a record of failure.* In the whole

* Huc gives a curious account of the supposed visit of an Englishman, Moorcroft, to Lhasa. Briefly stated, his assertion is that, though William Moorcroft is supposed to have died in 1825 at "Andkou," he really reached Lhasa in 1826, and lived there for twelve years undetected. Even his own servant believed him to be a Kashmiri. He was assassinated by brigands on his return journey, and the discovery of elaborate maps upon his person after death was the first indication to the Lhasans of his nationality. It must be remembered that Huc had this story direct from the Regent in Lhasa only eight years afterwards. The authority for the fact of his death in 1825 is a letter written by Trebeck, his companion. Trebeck himself died a few days later.

history of exploration, there is no more curious map than that which shows the tangled lines of travellers' routes towards this city, coming in from all sides, north, south, east and west, crossing, interlocking, retracing, all with one goal, and all baffled, some soon after the journey had been begun, some when the travellers might almost believe that the next hill would give them a distant glimpse of the golden roofs of the Potala. It has often been remarked to the writer that this consistent failure to reach a known spot, barely 200 miles from our own frontier, across a thinly-inhabited region, has never yet been accounted for. As a matter of fact, the reason is, I think, clear enough when that region has been visited. Roughly stated, there is in Tibet only one way of going from one place to another, whether the necessity lies in the nature of the ground or in the inability to obtain food, fuel and fodder elsewhere, and that in itself effectually reduces the chance of travelling without attracting observation. Thanks to the extraordinary system of Chinese postal relays, it is absolutely impossible for a traveller to prevent the news of his arrival reaching Lhasa. The population of Tibet is, it is true, small, and it might be thought that therefore a traveller enjoyed greater opportunities of escaping detection. It is a fact that one may go, not for hours only, but for days, along a well-known trade route without meeting a soul more than half a mile from the nearest village. But this very scantiness of population is the undoing of the trespasser; every face is as well known to the Tibetan villager as the face of the local Chinese official, to whom, under horrible penalties, the presence of a stranger, in whatever guise, must be at once reported. The merchants who pass up and down

upon the road are the only new faces that the Tibetan sees from year to year. High Lama officials may hurry through, and now and then the Chinese garrison of the nearest post may be relieved, but in both these cases there is a robe or uniform readily distinguishable by the villager, and he would be a daring man indeed who would attempt to thrust himself in disguise into the company of either the actual or the nominal ruling class in Tibet. Excepting these two classes every passer-by along the high road is subject to an unceasing scrutiny, which, it can readily be understood, has hitherto effectually prevented all attempts to visit the Forbidden City by stealth.

We have not space to include even the briefest summary of these plucky but doomed enterprises, but each of the tracks that contribute to the tangled skein which envelops Lhasa has its own peculiar interest. One remembers, one after another, the light-hearted and purposeless raid of Bonvalot and Prince Henri d'Orleans in 1890, the steady and scientifically invaluable progress of Bower and Thorold in 1891, the triple attempts of Rockhill—a determined American, whom everyone in the column would gladly have seen accompanying us into the city he had striven to reach for so many years at such a cost of time and labour—and the debt which geography owes to Henry and Richard Strachey must not be forgotten. All of these enterprises have, unfortunately, not ended in failure alone, and the murder of Dutreuil de Rhins, in 1894, and the disappearance of Mr. Rijnhart, in 1898, remain as significant proof of the very real danger which has been in the past, and, so far as one can forecast the future, will still remain an inevitable characteristic

of travel in Tibet. Of all these journeys, that of the Littledales, in 1894, was perhaps the most interesting, and those who knew either Mr. Littledale, or his nephew, Mr. Fletcher, will realise that further progress was absolutely and irrevocably prevented when even these two determined men acquiesced in the inevitable and gave up the attempt when within 70 miles of their long-desired goal.

The work of Russians in Tibet has been watched with some interest from India, and the names of Przhevalsky, Roborovsky, Kozlov and Pevtsov honourably recall a series of exploration extended over many years of which the pursuit and ultimate object were none the less admirable in themselves because they did not happen to commend themselves to the policy of the British Government.

These men were, of course, all Europeans. Of the secret surveys undertaken by the Indian Government I shall speak later.

Of Sven Hedin, it is not necessary to remind the reader. His own gallant attempt to reach Lhasa, which occupied over two years, is sufficiently recent to need no further description at this moment. His own record —unostentatious, and bearing the stamp of accurate observation in every line—is still wet from the press, and, though his adverse opinion as to the justice of our expedition had been freely expressed, the regret felt by every member of the Mission that Sven Hedin was not with us in Lhasa was genuine and deep.

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE TIBETAN QUESTION.

FOR many years there were almost no relations between the English conquerors of India and Tibet; but so far as any might be said to exist, they were, if anything, friendly. The policy of isolation which the authorities of Lhasa adopted had been formulated first in the early years of the eighteenth century, and we must not suppose that even previous to that date the lamas would have been willing to allow strangers to come to their capital in any numbers. But, as a matter of fact, the incredible remoteness of Lhasa, and the extreme difficulty of the road thither, had always prevented any but the hardiest from even attempting the grim journey. When, therefore, it became obvious that European trade and European traders were going to flourish in the Far East, it made no great difference that the Lhasan authorities decided once for all that strangers were not welcome there. This decree, however, they did not put into force with extreme rigour for a long time, and it is possible that Bogle, so late as 1774, might after all have succeeded in overcoming the opposition of the Regent.

Chinese supremacy over Tibet nominally dates from the year 1720, and as about that time the policy of isolation was adopted, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Chinese pressed it upon the Tibetans with the idea of making a "buffer state" of the most impenetrable description between their western province

and the unknown but growing power of the foreigners in India. Perhaps it was not the white foreigners alone that they dreaded; Nadir Shah's invasion of India in 1727 must have been the cause of some anxiety to the Middle Kingdom. In any case we may fairly accept the definite statement of many travellers that the isolation of Tibet was in its origin a Chinese device. But they taught willing pupils, and the tables are now so far reversed that the Chinese are unable to secure admittance into the province even for the strangers to whom they have given official permission. Mr. W. W. Rockhill, than whom no man has earned more deservedly a reputation for Tibetan erudition, has of course long wished to visit Lhasa. The American Government, on three occasions, has sent in a request to the Chinese that he should be permitted to make the journey, and that the Tibetan authorities should be compelled to receive him. The first promise was readily granted; the second, that which presupposed a real suzerainty over the Tibetans, they were frankly unable to make. They did their best: three times, as the suzerain power, they sent an order to Lhasa. Three times the Dalai Lama flatly and unconditionally refused even to consider Mr. Rockhill's admission.* The main responsibility, therefore, for the exclusion of foreigners from Tibet rests now with the Lamaic hierarchy. But the great game of exchanging responsibilities is as well known to those oriental hermits as it was to the firm of Spenlow and Jorkins. At one time the Chinese said that they were willing enough to allow strangers to travel freely in Tibet, but they deplored their inability to coerce the Lhasan Government; the Lhasan Government, on the other hand, stated that they would be

* This we discovered after our arrival in Lhasa.

glad to see foreigners within their borders, but unfortunately the orders of China were imperative. Latterly, however, the Tibetans abandoned this pretence, and at a great meeting of the Tsong-du, which was attended by representatives from all parts of the country, they made a national vow that no stranger, under any circumstances whatever, should henceforth be permitted to enter the country. This vow they made doubly sure by annexing it as an article of faith to the Buddhist creed. One of Colonel Younghusband's earliest diplomatic successes was the silencing of this plea. He asked them whether it were indeed part of the Buddhist faith or not? They answered that it was; he replied, that he knew the Buddhist scriptures well, and that nowhere from end to end of them was there one word which could justify this assertion. Retreating a little from their position the Tibetans then said, "Well, it is not perhaps really an article of faith, but we have decided that so it must be." To this Colonel Younghusband naturally answered that those who could make could also unmake, and that if their religion were not concerned there was no reason that they should not at once reconsider what was a mere matter of policy.

Had the Tibetans confined themselves to this assertion of their inviolability, our relations with the country would have remained as satisfactory as could have been wished. The loss of trade was after all a small matter, and, in any case, it was one which the Tibetans had every right to decide. But the presence in Lhasa of a single man began the trouble which eventually made the expedition necessary. The history of Dorjieff may as well be told at once.

About twenty-five years ago there arrived in Lhasa

a young lama from the Siberian steppes to the east of Lake Baikal. He was by birth a Mongolian Buriat, but by nationality a Russian subject. He was born at a place called Azochozki, and was destined from his youth to holy orders. He came to Lhasa and was received into that hot-bed of sedition, the Debung monastery, where, displaying unusual ability, he ultimately became professor of metaphysics. In no way did he dabble in political affairs, and he seemed destined to spend the autumn of his life as a teacher. He had reached the age of fifty-two when, more by chance than by design, he found himself involved in high international politics, and entered upon the adventurous career of intrigue which has made his name notorious in the chancelleries of Calcutta, London, and St. Petersburg. His first journey from Lhasa to Russia was innocent enough; he was sent in 1898 to collect contributions from the faithful, of whom there are many communities in the south-eastern provinces of Russia in Europe. He travelled in the country from town to town, and at last the Russian ministers seemed to have awakened to the opportunity which lay before them.

Throughout this book I do not wish to suggest that Russia, in attempting to gain influence in Lhasa, was guilty of anything which reflects the least discredit upon her statesmen. On the other hand, it was a farsighted and, from many points of view, an entirely laudable attempt to consolidate the Central Asian Empire, which she believes to be her rightful heritage. The only reason why the British found it necessary to intervene was that the equally justifiable policy which they had themselves deliberately adopted, and their own vastly greater interests in Tibet, clashed

all along the line with those of the Muscovite. Except that we have no wish to make ourselves responsible for the protection and good government of this huge and unwieldy province, the aims of the government of the Tzar are no doubt those of ourselves also. On either side it has been a mere measure of self-protection; we happen to have been the better placed to achieve our end. What the Russians did in allowing Dorjieff to represent them unofficially in Lhasa we should have been glad to be able to do, and it is a deplorable thing that the millions of northern Buddhists under our sway do not produce men of the capacity which is exhibited by a Dorjieff or a Norzunoff; if these men were to be found I fancy we should have used them willingly long ago. For these quick-witted adventurers are often the most effective screen which can be interposed between two advancing nationalities, so long, of course, as they are officially recognised by neither. But there was no one whom we could oppose to the dexterity of this Buriat lama.

He was originally best known by his Tibetan name, Ghomang Lobzang, but after his adoption of the position in which he has become famous, he is known to Western nations by his Russian title of Dorjieff—a name, by the way, which is merely a Russianized form of the typical Tibetan word, which means a "thunder-bolt," a "diamond," or, more important than all, the ultimate symbol of Lamaic authority, a small brass ornament, shaped somewhat like two royal crowns joined together by an inch of moulded brass. Other names, too, he has; Kawaguchi, the Japanese traveller, refers to him as Ngaku-wang-dorje; the commonest name in Lhasa itself for this man was that of his official position, or Khende-chega, and his name appears also as Akohwan

Darjilikoff. This list does not exhaust the number of his aliases, but it may indicate why the Government of India took some time to realise that one and the same man lay behind these different personalities which had, it was clear enough, at least one bond of union—that of hostility to British influence.

Precisely what took place in Russia has not been made public, but in these days of indiscreet memoirs it is not likely that the true inner history of Dorjieff's mission to Russia will long remain a secret. All that is known is that when he returned to Tibet Ghomang Lobzang found himself in the unofficial position of Russian agent in Lhasa. He brought with him a large number of exceedingly valuable presents, and he lost no time in trying to persuade the Lhasan hierarchy that it was to their interest to secure the informal protection of the Tzar of Russia. Briefly stated, his arguments were these :—You have no strength in the country to resist invaders ; your natural protector and suzerain, China, is a broken reed ; even at this moment she is entirely under the domination of the British. If you remain any longer trusting to her support, you will find that she has thrown you as a sop to the Indian Government. The English are a rapacious and heretical nation ; they will not respect your religion ; they will bring you into servitude, and the ancient and honourable rule of the priests in this country will be surely put an end to. On the other hand, if you will ask the aid of Russia you will secure the most powerful protector in the world. You will have gained on your side the only military power which is able to crush the English nation. More than that, you may be able to induce the great monarch of that nation to embrace your faith. Another emperor as great as he has in past ages been

converted to our great faith, and if you can convince Nicholas, whose sympathies with Buddhism are universally admitted, it will not be long before the whole Russian race are obedient servants and loyal disciples of your Holiness.

Such, in rough outline, was Dorjieff's policy. It produced an almost immediate effect upon the Dalai Lama himself. Impetuously, without consulting his national council, he accepted the suggestion, and even proposed to visit St. Petersburg in person. The sacred cushion on which his Holiness should sit in audience with the Tzar, and a beautiful *codex aureus* from his own library, were sent at once, and will probably remain in the Imperial museum on the banks of the Neva as a curious and significant reminiscence of the great and daring policy which so nearly succeeded in Russianizing, at a stroke, the most autocratic and far-reaching religious empire of Asia. But the Dalai Lama had reckoned too hastily; the Tsong-du had still to be consulted, and here the Dalai Lama received a check which was the beginning of all the internal troubles which have hampered the proper management of Tibetan diplomacy ever since. The Tsong-du replied diplomatically that it was very nice of the Russian Emperor, but that they required no protection, and that the Dalai Lama had exceeded his authority in committing the country even to a consideration of Dorjieff's offer. The Grand Lama did all in his power to induce them to accept his scheme, but without avail, and the next year another ruse was adopted by Dorjieff to further the interests of his patrons.

He went again to St. Petersburg, and there was received in audience by the Emperor himself; he

returned after a short stay, the bearer of two interesting things.* One was a letter, asking that the Dalai Lama should despatch an envoy to Russia to discuss the matter more fully. The other was a complete set of vestments appertaining to a Bishop of the Russian Church. Later on in this book their importance and significance will be referred to; for the moment, the political fruits of this embassy to St. Petersburg claim our attention. In spite of the recent declarations of the Tsong-du, the Dalai Lama, on his own responsibility, sent in response Tsan-nyid, an abbot of high rank, to accompany Dorjieff, who, a month after his arrival at Lhasa, was again on the road to Europe. The two men made their way through Nepal and India to Colombo, where they embarked on a Russian vessel for Odessa. Upon their arrival in Russia they were received with the highest consideration, and a second audience with the Tzar was granted them. Ultimately they set off on their return journey and reached Lhasa about December, 1901. They there laid before the Dalai Lama a proposal from the Russian Government, that a Prince of the royal house should take up his residence in Lhasa for the purpose of promoting friendly relations between the two countries. It may well be imagined, whether it were so expressed or not in the message, that the Russians would have considered it necessary that a small armed guard should accompany his Imperial Highness. The other document which the returning abbot laid before his master was the hotly-discussed agreement between Russia and Tibet. Those who deny that a treaty was ever formally made

* It is of some interest to note that he made the record journey between Urga and Lhasa; he covered the distance in ninety days.

between Tibet and Russia are perfectly correct. It requires no great perspicacity to see that under the relations then existing between Tibet and China no such treaty could have been valid, even if it had been made. But it was not made; the treaty, the terms of which were definite enough, remained rather as a pledge than as an assurance; it represented, in a permanent form, the kindly feelings of the Russians towards Tibet; it was there to encourage the Tibetans should any difficulty arise with their southern neighbours; it was a comfortable guarantee that the Russians would encourage Buddhism in their extending empire of Central Asia. In return, the Russians asked for facilities which the poor people of Lhasa may be pardoned for having misunderstood. Concessions to construct railways must seem insignificant enough to a country which has not a wheel within its borders except a prayer-wheel; but to the eye of the uncharitable European diplomatist the very mention of railways in connection with Russia calls up a wide field of reminiscence and implication. That treaty was an informal reduction to terms of an unratified and an unratifiable arrangement with Tibet. It was none the less dangerous. The Chinese officials in Lhasa were from the first aware of it, and at once attributed to this understanding with Russia the sudden insolence and insubordination with which Tibet treated and continued to treat the advice and even the orders of their suzerain.

So far as the Dalai Lama was concerned, the treaty would have been signed at once, but the other authorities were immovable. On behalf of the suzerain's power, the Chinese Viceroy denounced it as treason to his Imperial master; as to the proposed residence of a

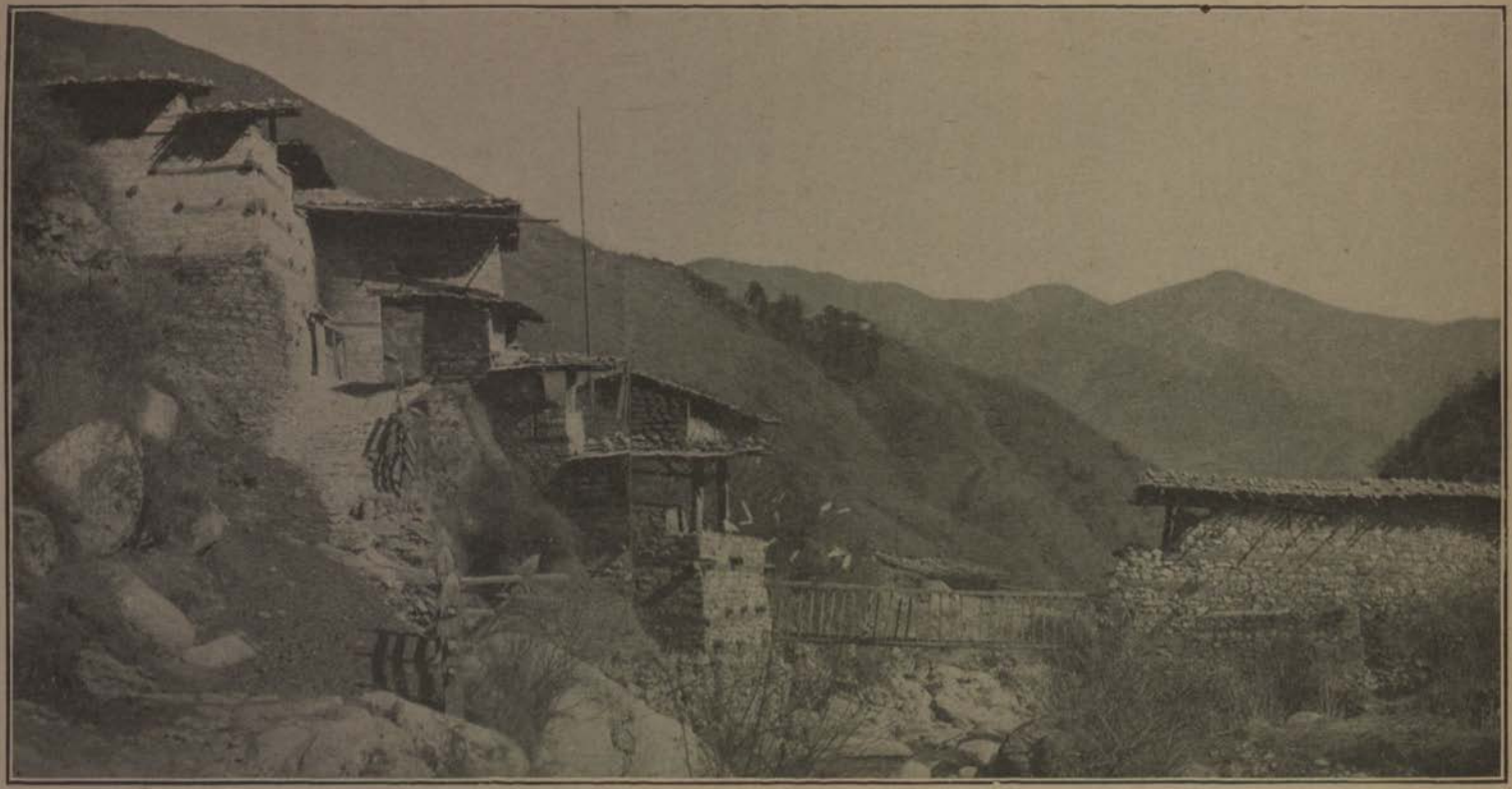
Russian Grand Duke, the objections of the high officials to the intrusion of a European among them, be he prince or peasant, were loud and universal. The Tsong-du refused to be drawn into the discussion again, or to allow the Chinese Emperor's position as suzerain of Tibet to be ousted by the Tzar, or by anyone else.

The Dalai Lama, in bitter anger, then adopted other tactics; if he could not persuade the Tsong-du to accept Russian protection by fair means, he was not averse to use others. From this date onwards he was without question riding for a fall with the English. To provoke aggression with India would, in his opinion, bring the whole matter to a crisis. The Chinese were neither willing nor able to interfere effectually to protect Tibet. The Russians were, as he believed, both able and willing, and he looked to compel the Tsong-du to adopt his policy by placing them in a position in which they had no other resort than to accept it. Russian rifles came into the country in camel loads; the arsenal at Lhasa was furbished up and a new water-wheel put in; and Dorjieff, on his side, stated that the Russians would have a detachment of Cossacks in Lhasa by the spring of 1903. It occurs to one that there must have been a considerable body of opinion in Lhasa sympathetic to Dorjieff's suggestions, or he would never have ventured to make so daring a prophecy. As it was, however, he seems to have taken pains that this boast should reach Lord Curzon's ears. It did, and the fat was in the fire.

Such, then, was the position of affairs into which it became imperative for India to intervene. Excuses for interference were ready to hand. The Tibetans

had encroached upon our territory in Sikkim, they had established a customs post at Giao-gong, fifteen miles inside the frontier, and had forbidden British subjects to pass their outposts there; they had thrown down the boundary pillars which had been set up along the undisputed water-shed between the Tista and the Ammo chu. They had insulted the treaty rights of the British by building a wall across the only road from Tibet to the market of Yatung, which had been thrown open to trade with India by the stipulations of the Convention of 1890–3; more than this, they returned unopened letters sent by the Viceroy to the Grand Lama in Lhasa. These insults would never have given rise to the despatch of an expedition if the Tibetans had not added injury to them by their dalliance with Russia. As it was, there was nothing else to do but intervene, and that speedily. With characteristic decision Lord Curzon made up his mind to come to an understanding with these turbulent children, and in the spring of 1903 he sent hastily for Major Bretherton and asked him to present a scheme for the immediate advance to Lhasa of 1,200 rifles. But this was found to be impracticable, and the home authorities were as yet far from understanding the urgency of the matter.

It is not unjust to say that from first to last the home Government had mistaken the real importance of the issue. The utmost that Lord Curzon could persuade them to do was to sanction the despatch of Colonel Younghusband, with a small escort, to await the Tibetan representatives in the little post of Kambajong, some fifteen miles north of the true Sikkim frontier. This the Government consented to do, but they added



The wall built by the Tibetans at Yatung to prevent access from Tibet to the trade mart established at that place by the 1890-3 Convention.

loudly and publicly that under no circumstances whatever would an advance from Kamba-jong be permitted. This intelligence was instantly communicated by a gentleman in the pay of the Chinese to the Amban in Lhasa, and from that moment, naturally enough, the ultimate necessity of an advance to Lhasa itself was ensured.

The stay at Kamba-jong of the Mission was, therefore, not of the greatest political importance, but a brief account of it is here necessary. On the 5th of July Mr. Claude White, the Political Officer in Sikkim, and Captain W. F. T. O'Connor, the only white man who can speak Tibetan fluently, arrived at Giao-gong, high up the La-chen Valley, where they were met by a small party of Tibetans who attempted to oppose their progress. It was pointed out to them that Kamba-jong had been chosen by the Indian Government for negotiations, and that the Chinese Government had assented and undertaken to co-operate with the Tibetans in negotiating at that place. To Kamba-jong, therefore, the members of the Mission intended to proceed. Hands were laid upon their bridle reins but easily brushed aside, and no further active opposition was offered. They moved on that day to the true frontier at the Kangra Lamo Pass. On the next day they actually set foot on Tibetan territory and were met by a small Chinese official named Ho, who asked them not to go on to Kamba-jong; they returned the same answer to him as to the Tibetans at Giao-gong, whereupon he ceased all further opposition and drowned his cares in opium. On the next day Kamba-jong was reached, and a small encampment was made at the foot of the hill on which the fort is built. This

fort is an imposing structure, crowning, in the usual Tibetan manner, the crest of a sharp hill ; the plain over which Kamba-jong dominates is a wide, flat stretch, separated only by low hills from the main Himalayan ranges. This first view of the world's backbone from the north is, from one point of view, disappointing, because of the great height, 15,000 feet and more, from which it is seen. But the distant view of Mount Everest, here clearly distinguishable from the surrounding ice-fields, is imposing, though nearly a hundred miles away. The plain of Kamba is a bare stretch of earth and wormwood, dotted with big boulders, and here and there affording a scanty pasturage of coarse grass.

The camp was pitched in two portions and earthworks were thrown up ; small as it was, it would have been a difficult camp to take by storm, and here the Mission waited in patience. For the reasons I have just suggested their patience was not rewarded ; emissaries did, indeed, come down from Lhasa, but after a formal visit to Colonel Younghusband, who followed Mr. White after an interval of a few days, they shut themselves up in the jong and had nothing further to do with the Mission. At times a Chinese official, more out of inquisitiveness than anything else, came into the camp. Always there were a few Tibetans lounging outside the earthworks in mild curiosity, but the days went on and nothing further was done than the surveying and geological work of the Mission experts. Mr. Hayden, of the Geological Survey, was entrusted with the latter work ; Captain Walton, I.M.S., here began his natural history notes and collections. Mr. White roamed about the district as far as the Tibetans permitted him to go. Life was

Looking west from Kamba jong.

(Reproduced by kind permission of Mr. Claude White and Messrs. Johnston and Hoffmann.)

[*To face page* 40.—Vol. I.

not unpleasant,* but no business was done, and the advent of the Abbot of Tashi-lhunpo was a welcome break in the monotony. This typical ecclesiastic appeared bringing a courteous message from the Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo. He was an intelligent man of a superior type, and evinced the utmost interest in all the instruments and habits of the English. The gramophone was employed to impress him; hereby a somewhat amusing tale hangs. This gramophone had been exhibited before to some Tibetan officials, who had said that it was not half as good as the gramophone in Lhasa. This statement somewhat paralysed the Mission. They inquired the reason. "Oh," said the official, "the Lhasa machine will not only give out sounds, but it will take down and give out again our own voices!" After this there was no question but that phonographs were among the European luxuries which Dorjieff had brought from his new masters. Something had to be done to restore British credit, so by night a disc was scraped flat, and it was found that a fairly good original record could be made. On the following day, therefore, a Tibetan was asked to speak or sing into the machine; this he promptly did, and after a pause of some anxiety the gramophone rendered back his voice, to his amusement and delight. This record was triumphantly rendered on the machine to the Abbot of Tashi-lhunpo, but it was not until the interpreter explained the matter afterwards that the growing stoniness of the worthy cleric's face during the performance was fully understood. Apparently our Tibetan, being in a mischievous mood, had recited

* On one occasion Mr. White and Major Iggulden rode up on ponies to a height of 21,000 ft. above the sea. This must sound strange to many Alpine mountaineers.

into the gramophone a popular Tibetan song of the most unfortunate description.

One thing is worth recording: One morning the Abbot paid a visit to the camp and listened to accounts of the latest discoveries of Western science calmly and not without interest. He himself suggested no criticisms until he was directly asked by Captain O'Connor some point in connection with the Tibetan knowledge of this planet. He answered courteously, but very decidedly, that what we English believed as to the nature of the earth was interesting as showing the strides which science had begun to make in distant parts; "but," he said, "of course you are quite wrong in this matter; the earth is shaped like a shoulder of mutton bone, and so far from being only a small country, Tibet occupies nearly one-half of its extent. However, do not despair; if you will continue to read industriously and will read better books, there is no doubt that you will be learned in time." In the face of this I regret to have to record that our scientists collapsed ignominiously, and no one even attempted to justify the illusions of Europe.

Now and then the usual message was received:— "Go back to Giao-gong and there we will discuss the matter; we will not discuss the matter while you are at Kamba-jong." On one occasion a small durbar was held, though Colonel Younghusband entirely demurred to the social position and the political importance of the men who represented themselves as the Tibetan delegates. He explained the whole position at full length; he set out the reasons which had induced us to attempt to come to an amicable arrangement with our neighbour; he recapitulated the events of the past few

years, reproaching the Tibetans with having broken the treaty of 1890–3, and finally concluded by earnestly asking that the Tibetans should co-operate with ourselves in bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion. In order that there might be no mistake his speech had been carefully written out to be handed on to the Dalai Lama. At the conclusion he presented the envelope to the chief Tibetan official, who shrank from it in horror; he utterly refused to touch it, and he as positively declined even to report in Lhasa the speech to which he had just listened; no one, in fact, would take the responsibility of having any official intercourse with us.

This was the universal attitude of the Tibetan representatives up to the last. The following story is a curious illustration of it. The Tibetans once sent in an oral protest chiefly directed against the extended ramblings of Mr. White and others of the Mission. They also protested against Hayden's chipping little pieces from the mountains; they said, and it was difficult to refute it, that we should not like them to come and chip pieces off the houses in Calcutta. Nor did they approve of the heliograph, by which they believed that we could both see through mountains and control the rain. But the wanderings of the members of the Mission was what they particularly disliked. This was, perhaps, not unreasonable, though a certain amount of reconnoitering was necessary in order to collect firewood, and even country produce, which the good people of the country were always eager to sell us, provided they could appease their superiors by the pretence that we had compelled them to trade with us. Colonel Younghusband, wishing in every way in his power to accustom the Tibetans to communicate

with ourselves, asked that the request should be put into writing and signed. It was a very simple thing, and the Tibetans wrote the request without demur, but, to the Colonel's surprise, they point-blank refused to sign it. After interminable persuasion one of them snatched up a pen and made a little mark in the corner of the sheet; this, when examined, proved to be no signature at all. The thing was so ridiculous that the ponies for another excursion were saddled up and brought to the gate of the camp, and the Tibetans were told that if they could not put their names to this protest the English could not believe that they had authority to make it. Then, and then only, in despair did the Tibetan officials sign the paper. This was a most illuminating little incident, and to the very end the Tibetans were faithful to the policy of which it forms so good an illustration.

So it became evident that nothing could be done at Kamba-jong, and Colonel Younghusband suspected, as was indeed the case, that the Tibetans had got wind of his strict injunctions not to advance further into the country. It then became necessary to take stronger action, and with the concurrence of the India Office it was arranged that he should go to Gyantse, and there make a second attempt to carry through the negotiations with which he had been entrusted.

At this point a divergence of opinion occurred; it was originally suggested by Younghusband that two columns should converge upon the Kala tso; one with 2,500 yaks as transport should occupy the Chumbi Valley, and move on directly by the side of the Bam tso, under Colonel Macdonald, who had been at work for some time in Darjeeling as C.R.E., organising the routes along which the expedition was to travel; the

other, consisting of the Mission, of which the guard was to be considerably reinforced, with 500 yaks, was to go across country by the Lango la; at the same time, 400 Nepalese troops were to occupy Kamba-jong, and cover the advance of the Mission. To this scheme Macdonald, who now appeared for the first time, demurred; he pointed out that this advance in two weak columns without means of communication gave the Tibetans the opportunity of dealing with each separately; that the *rendezvous* was an unknown point in the enemy's country; that the roads to it were also unknown, and that it was, therefore, difficult to effect a meeting at a given moment. He further pointed out that the Mission, which would be the weaker of the two columns, would have to march with its flank exposed to the enemy and without communications in its rear. On the 16th of October, Colonel Younghusband, who had returned from Kamba-jong, seeing the uselessness of any further residence, met Colonel (then Brigadier-General) Macdonald at Darjeeling. By this time the matter was further complicated by the question of yak transport. The Nepalese made a present of 500 yaks to the Mission; these were intended to act as transport for the Mission in their cross-country journey; the other yaks were to be bought in Nepal and taken across Sikkim. Macdonald pointed out the dangers of attempting to take the yaks through the Tista Valley, and his forebodings ultimately proved to be well justified. But the 500 yaks which were to reach Kamba-jong by the Tipta la were turned back by the Tibetans; whereupon the Nepalese asserted that, in spite of anything urged to the contrary, the yaks could safely be taken down to the level of the Tista Valley, and the military

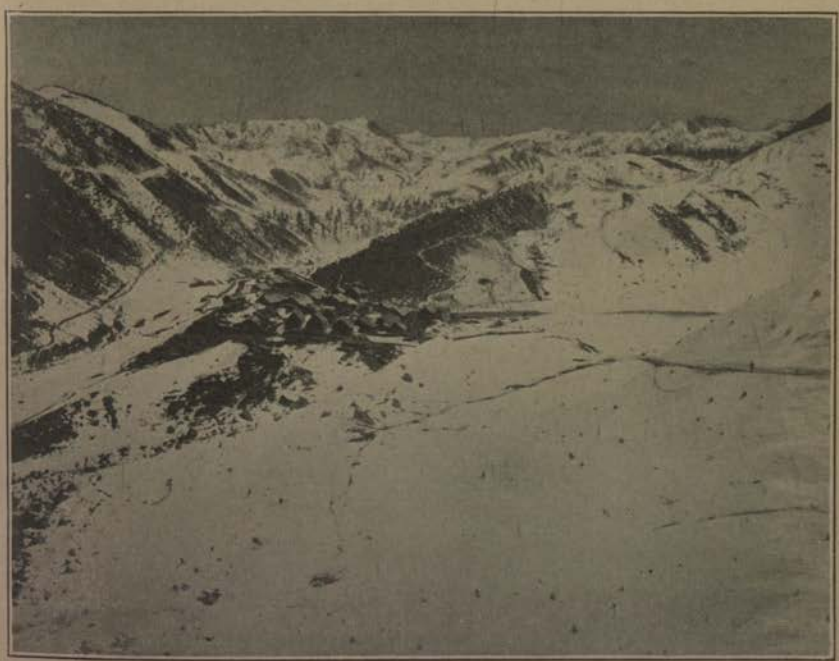
authorities, accepting their statement, committed themselves to this course.

The official estimate of the distribution of the Tibetan force at this date is interesting; they were supposed to have 500 men at Kamba-jong, where a night attack was imminent, 2,000 men at Shigatse, 500 between Shigatse and Kamba-jong, 1,000 at Gyantse, and a few in the Chumbi Valley. On the 8th of November the Tibetans were reported to be moving 3,000 men towards Chumbi, and a week later it was said that nearly 3,000 more soldiers were advancing upon Kamba-jong, a somewhat significant action: foot-and-mouth disease was at the same time reported to have made terrible ravages among the Nepalese yaks.* For these accumulated reasons the advance in two columns was abandoned, and it was decided to move in a single strong column through the Chumbi Valley.

The question then arose, first, as to the route by which the Chumbi Valley should be reached, and, secondly, as to the date at which the retirement from Kamba-jong should be carried out. Colonel Younghusband was naturally anxious, under the circumstances, that no retreat should be made from Kamba-jong until a footing had been effected in Tibetan territory in the Chumbi Valley. It was, therefore, decided to make the two movements coincident in point of time. As to the route to be adopted, Mr. Claude White was of opinion that in October the Jelep Pass was preferable. There was this to be said in its favour that it was already well known to us, and had been used in the 1888 expedition. It was arranged that the original advance was to be made over the Jelep, but it was also decided to im-

* This was afterwards discovered to be anthrax.

prove and utilise the Natu la route through Gangtok, and this eventually became the sole line of communication. By the 10th of December there were concentrated at Gnathong two guns of No. 7 Mountain Battery, the machine gun of the 2nd Battn. Norfolk regiment, two seven-pounders, half a company of the 2nd



Gnathong.

Sappers, eight companies of the 23rd Sikh Pioneers, and six companies of the 8th Gurkhas, with the necessary hospital, ammunition, and postal columns. On the 11th a short march was made to Ku-pup, and on the 12th the Jelep was crossed in bitter weather. On the 13th the column reached Yatung, and after a formal protest made its way through the gateway in the Tibetan wall, where a not unfriendly welcome was extended by

the officials. On the 16th Chumbi was reached, and two days later a column of 800 men set out to Phari, which was reached on the 21st; the jong at this place was at once occupied by our troops. This gave rise to a difference of opinion between the Commissioner and Macdonald. The former had, for diplomatic reasons, undertaken to the Tibetans that the fort should not be occupied unless it were defended; the General, for over-balancing military considerations, decided that it would be dangerous to leave it unoccupied, and it was consequently taken.

The behaviour of the Tibetans now became more threatening. Representatives of the Three Monasteries* arrived at Phari, and forbade the people round to supply us with any of the necessaries of life; the Chinese Colonel Chao was willing to do all he could, but he evidently had little authority, and his successor, Major Li, said that nothing could be done in Lhasa at this moment, as the Grand Lama was relying upon Russian support and would pay no respect to the Chinese demands. Colonel Younghusband noticed about this time the despondency even of our own followers at the thought of invading Tibet. They believed that we were doomed men; the whole of the drivers of the Tibetan Pony Corps had bolted at Gnathong, and the desertions of followers and even private servants were innumerable. He summed the position up tersely:—"We have not one ounce of prestige on this frontier." From political motives, he determined to winter at Tuna, a small village about nineteen miles from Phari, across the Tang la. He adopted this course because of the unwillingness of

*The three monasteries of Sera, De-bung and Gaden, near Lhasa, containing twenty thousand monks, are the ultimate political authorities in Tibet. In very important matters they are able to overrule even the Grand Lama.

the Tibetans to admit that entrance into the Chumbi Valley was really entrance into Tibet itself; and he felt it necessary to occupy a position at least as far advanced into Tibet as Kamba-jong had been. General Macdonald found the position inconvenient from the point

The Jelep la.

of view of transport, but the political reasons were important enough to decide the question.

At Tuna, therefore, three months of weary waiting ensued while Major G. H. Bretherton, a man of experience and great capacity, was organising supply and transport along the lines of communication. It was felt that a very large amount of stores must be accumulated in the Chumbi Valley before any advance

to Gyantse was possible. Life at Tuna was uninteresting and bitterly cold. The Tibetans had gathered in considerable strength at Guru, a place about nine miles away on the road to Gyantse. Here for the first time the Commissioner was able to deliver his message to thoroughly representative men. But its reception was unsatisfactory. After a fruitless attempt to make the delegates pay him an official visit, Colonel Younghusband determined to ride over in person to their camp informally; it was a characteristically audacious action, and if it had failed—if, that is to say, Colonel Younghusband and the two or three officers with him had been killed or kidnapped, as was not unlikely—the responsibility for the outbreak of war which would have inevitably followed must have rested upon the Commissioner. But Younghusband is a shrewd judge of Orientals, and, besides, he is not one of those men with whom an Oriental takes a liberty; and though, as will be seen, the visit was not entirely successful, it seemed at the time to be almost the last chance of coming to terms with our opponents upon a perfectly friendly basis. The Tibetan general was the senior Dépen of Lhasa, one of the Lheding family, and he received Colonel Younghusband with great politeness. But upon the Commissioner's introduction to the room in which the representatives of the three monasteries were seated, the atmosphere became electric at once. They neither rose nor returned his salutation, but after an informal discussion had been initiated they took command of the conversation, maintaining throughout an unfriendly attitude, and insisting that no European could be allowed in Tibet on any account, and that if any settlement was to be carried through we

must return to Ya-tung.* As Younghusband was taking his leave and expressing a hope that the Tibetans would visit him at Tuna their tempers changed; in a threatening way they clamoured for the instant retirement of the British; they demanded insolently to know the exact date on which the British would evacuate Tibetan territory, trumpets were blown outside and the attendants closed round the small party. Younghusband betrayed not the slightest uneasiness, and O'Connor helped to save the situation by the almost superhuman suavity which he can assume when he wishes. A messenger accompanied Colonel Younghusband back to Tuna to receive his answer, which was, of course, to the effect that he was obliged to carry out the orders of his Government.

The Lheding Dépen subsequently called at Tuna; he was a pleasant man, but, in the words of the Commissioner, he was not clever; he had little strength of character, and he was entirely in the hands of his three monk colleagues. Nothing, therefore, had been done, and Colonel Younghusband was obliged to wait in the cold everlasting wind of the Tuna plateau for the first advance of the troops. Meanwhile the Tibetans gathered strength in his immediate neighbourhood, and from time to time there were disquieting rumours of their intention to make a night attack. Colonel Hogge, with four companies of the 23rd Pioneers and the Norfolk Maxim detachment, was, however, thoroughly able to hold Tuna against any conceivable concentration of Tibetan forces. The telegraph wire was not

* This place was sometimes confounded by the Tibetans themselves with Gna-thong. It is spelled "Sna-mdong," and the "*s*" and the "*m*" are of course not sounded. I do not know how the English pronunciation originated.

put up to Tuna till March, so a heliograph on the summit of the Tang la was in daily use.

Meanwhile, the General took up his quarters at Chumbi, in a not uncomfortable house at Bakcham, about three-quarters of a mile from the encampment at New Chumbi. The Coolie Corps, which Mr. White had undertaken to organise, was in working order by the middle of January, and under the able superintendence of Captain Souter contributed greatly to the accumulations of stores, which were steadily passing over the Jelep route, and creating tarpaulin-covered hillocks at Chumbi. The choice of the Natu la was accepted by Mr. White after the alternative road over the Yak la* had been tried. The Yak la is the shortest road between Chumbi and Gangtok, to which place a good cart-road runs from Siliguri in the plains of India, but to the best of my belief only one party ever crossed it. It was my fortune to be one of them. Bad as all these passes are, the eastern descent of the Yak la is beyond comparison the worst—a mere semi-perpendicular scramble four miles deep, down which one could only go by jumping from one boulder to another; many of these were coated with ice, and some crashed down the *khud* upon the lightest pressure. I do not think I have ever been so cold in my life as when I was helping Mr. White to put up a valuable self-registering thermometer upon the extreme summit of the Yak la. I do not remember what the temperature exactly was; I remember that when we took it out of the box it was 4° below freezing point, but in the five minutes which it took us to set up strongly the pole to which it was to be

* The yak pass pronounced Ya la. The Jelep is the "beautiful flat pass" and is spelled "rges-lep-la."

attached, it had fallen over 30° ; there was a wind like a knife edge the whole time, against which thick clothing and poshteens were as gauze. To illustrate the difficulty and hardship of that crossing, it is, I think, only necessary to say that that thermometer still stands at the summit of the pass ; no one has ever summoned up enough courage to go and take it away. The idea of using the Yak la was abandoned, and the lines of supply were thenceforward the Jelep and the Natu la. Over these no burdened beast can pass. Only on the backs of coolies could the precious stores be carried across, slowly and painfully. It was a tremendous task, and it was difficult to believe that day after day, week after week, month after month, obstacles so appalling could be overcome by the small men of Sikkim who composed the corps.

Still, forty thousand pounds weight of stores was daily delivered in Chumbi, and Major Bretherton and Captain Souter are alike to be congratulated indeed upon so brilliant an achievement. The road from India that these stores had travelled is worth a chapter to itself. Beyond all question the track that leads from Siliguri through Sikkim to Phari is the most wonderful and beautiful on earth.

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CHAPTER III.

THE STARTING PLACE OF THE EXPEDITION.

SILIGURI itself was of no greater interest than the rail-head of any expedition usually is. It is true that it had become transformed from an idle little junction, whence the toy train started daily for Darjeeling, into a bustling warehouse of military supplies. New tents sprang up in rows, tarpaulin-covered heaps rose like great boulders from the plain, loaded trucks crammed the sidings of the station, long droves of mules detrained and were sent off—too soon in many cases—on their long journey to the front. Officers reported themselves and went on, but the village itself remained the same dull, mosquito-ridden spot, which has always been avoided like the plague by anyone whose business or duty brings him into this part of the world. There is an English club at Jalpaiguri, an hour's run away, and the inadequacy of the dak bungalow at Siliguri is chiefly due to the fact that no one used it. A man can get a good dinner at 7 o'clock in the railway refreshment rooms, take the Calcutta express an hour later and sleep at Jalpaiguri. Travellers who have looked out from the train at the scattered patch of low houses that spots the burnt brown grass of the plain have seen all that there is of interest in Siliguri. The tiny track of the Dar-

jeeling railway runs in timidly beside the broad gauge of the Bengal line, and the place is only remembered by most travellers as the point at which they climbed into the little char-a-banc cars that suggest rather a child's playing at travelling than a serious railway which is going to deposit them and their luggage in Darjeeling 7,000 feet up in the clouds to the north. Then Siliguri passes into the limbo of forgotten things, even while the train is making its violent little scamper across the flat to the foot of the hills, or leaping, catlike, from side to side of the slowly up-winding cart road, pouncing upon it only to let it crawl out again from under the wheels of its little engine for another two hundred yards on the other side.

But there is another journey to be made from Siliguri, a different journey indeed. It promises little enough at the beginning. One rides out from the station, threading one's way at first through the little houses of the town, and then dodging across the irrigation channels of the fields until the North road is gained. As you climb the slope of the low embankment and kick up the first hoof-ful of the deep dust you are on the road to Lhasa. The opening stage is common and dreary enough, but four hundred miles away this road, which you see slowly slipping below you, ends in a loop ensnaring the golden roofs of the Potala and of the Cathedral, and round that loop the sad-eyed lamas, muttering their unchanging prayer, creep solemnly all day, turning ever to the right.

Here all round is the wide flat plain, north, south, east and west; the grass is burnt, the fields are dusty and the white ribbon of the road swerves and

straightens between the heavy-scented, white-flowered siris trees, like any other road in the peninsula. To the northward the clouds conceal the rampart of the Himalayas with a deep gray and indigo veil; elsewhere the sun shines crudely from the hard white sky. Napil-para slowly heaves in sight, just where a belt of trees slants inward to the track; a mile further on the road plunges into the great Baikuntpur sal forest. A country bullock cart, with whining wheels, jolts very slowly in front, haloed in a cloud of dust. The driver is asleep, and the flies settle spectacle-wise around the sore eyelids of the sedate beasts. In after days, the moaning, dusty cart, redolent of all the heat of Indian plains, just entering the shade of the tall straight sal trees with their wide, crimsoning leaves was a curious memory in which the "ching-chik, ching-chik" of the spear-bells of the mail runners, bringing their letters over the last stage of their long journey, rang continually in very different scenes. Under the shade of the sal forest the white dust heaps itself on either side of the track, powdering the glossy vegetation and reducing every bush and plant alike to the nameless insignificance of the undergrowth which is common to all countries in all dry seasons. For sheer folly the idiotic energy of a sweeper sweeping in mid-jungle was equalled by the inspiration of the English engineer, who had wasted hundreds of precious iron telegraph posts beside the road where nature was offering him a pole every six yards gratuitous and perfect.

Half-way through the wood the crossing of the Phulbari Ghat path attracts two or three huts. At last there is a dip and the road drops at the eleventh

mile to cross the stream into Sevoke. The sight of a Himalayan river reaching the plain is worth looking at. The Tista, pent up between narrow and precipitous hills for eighty miles, here bursts fan-wise over the Terai, marked and parcelled by long smooth banks of sand, through which in twenty channels the suddenly contented water drifts slowly and at peace.

The Himalayas' southern front ends with an abruptness which is almost startling, and five or six miles away it would have been difficult to point out a fissure in the great wall of mountains which stands untopped across the wide flat waste of northern Bengal. Through this curtain there is this one narrow channel and India ends at its jaws. The towering cliffs, clothed suddenly with vegetation wherever root-hold can be found, spring sharply upwards, and the first turn in the track by the river hides the plains, with their blue lines of trees fifteen miles away beside the levelled water. Sevoke, planted at the water-side just where the sticks of the fan diverge, is a little street of grubby huts. Dust hangs heavy in the air, and dryness dulls the leaves. The only wet thing at Sevoke is the water itself, as it slackens way and gently swerves outwards at the foot of its long stair. Even the rough dug-out boats, moored to the pebbly bank, are coated with dust, and the lumps of camphor are almost indistinguishable in the boxes in the shops from the inevitable Pedro cigarettes beside them. From Sevoke onwards the beauty of the road begins to grow. The track runs on the westward bank of the Tista, fifteen or twenty feet above the snow-green water. Almost from the first mile post it is a gradually increasing riot of foliage such as Hooker himself admitted to be unparalleled in the world. There is no colour on God's

palette which He has not used along this road. There is no variety of vegetation which He has not permitted to find its own place somewhere beside the slowly chilling path. Sal and gurjun lead on through teak to kapok and bamboo, then on through tree fern and rhododendron to the pine. Beyond these last, birch-trees alone survive among the frozen rocks of the upper snows. At their roots, or from the hill-side above their tops, round their stems, or springing from their wood is almost every flower known to man, here wasting its luxuriance along the loneliest and loveliest two hundred miles on earth. Pepper ferns, with their dark green glossy foliage, vines and bind weeds, begonias and asphodel tangle themselves about the undergrowth of gorgeous shrubs, or stumps gay with scarlet fungus and dripping moss. Overhead the bald scarp of the rock, orange and ochre and cinnamon rarely broke through the trailing glories of smilax and other creepers. Once or twice down on the road itself, where a passage had been blasted years ago, the deep crystalline garnet rang not only with the echoes of the sweeping water below, but with the tiny persistence of the drip-well from its roof. Ferns lurk in every cleft, and, higher up, the majesty of some great osmunda thrusts itself clear of the green confusion round its roots. Of greens, indeed, from the dark moss myrtle of some varnished leaf that ought to have been a magnolia, but probably was not, to the aquamarine of the young and dusted bamboo grass, from the feathery emerald of some patch of giant moss to the rich olive of a crown-vallary of orchid, none is unrepresented.

Where the valley vegetation lies in the ugliest putrefaction there you will find the living jewels of this long fillet—a flash of emerald and chrome glazed with

chocolate ; a patch of brown, shot through and through with sapphire in the sun ; a swallow-tail with olivine and black velvet where we may rarely see, beside some Norfolk broad, the dun and cream of his poor English cousin. Strong in the wing, zigzagging unballasted in ten-foot swoops of pure colour, the butterflies lace the sunlight. And underfoot in the deep soft white dust the kidney footmark of the brown ox, or the kukri-like print of the high instepped native are the only reminders in that hot world of colour that there are other things as graceless as oneself.

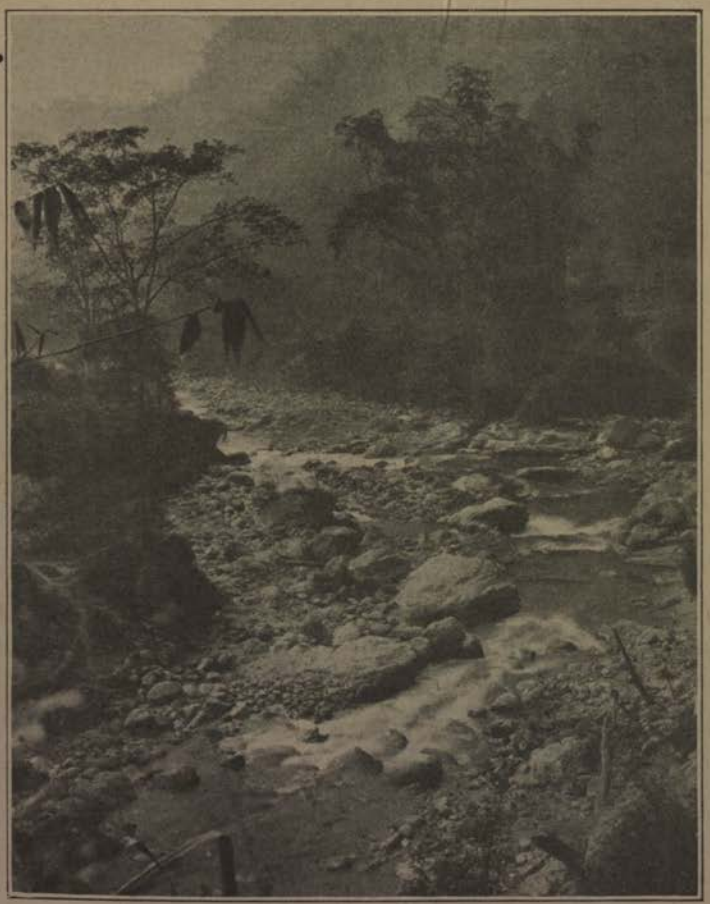
At Riang, where the road falls into the river every year with a regularity worthy of something better, a stream breaks through from the west, and for a moment the dingy picturesqueness of a semi-Indian settlement beneath its trees drives back the beauties of the road. But in half a mile the path turns again beneath close matted branches overhead and winds, deep rutted, beside the rank dark vegetation which is characteristic of just this place—flowerless, amorphous and heavy. The Tista bridge swings out its curve from behind a rock, and one crosses the narrow span, realising from its scanty width that one has left behind the normal limits of wheeled cart traffic. The road, still ascending, keeps on the left bank of the Tista river, passing Mali-ghat among its trees three miles on. Slowly the character of the vegetation changes, though the fact of its being still tropical is clear enough from a tiger trap halfway between Mali-ghat and Tar Kola. Beside this latter place the road runs along tirelessly, curving and recurving beside the shallow stream. At the junction of the Tista with the Rang-po the creaming white crests over the rock points below valiantly hold their own all day

against the down sweep of the green turquoise flood. Sometimes for a mile one does but hear the stream of the Rang-po murmuring invisibly through the trees; again over its very waters the track clings scantily round the bare red scarp of some intruding spur, hand-railed most rottenly. A warm breath of guimauve-like scent pants out at one here: there is the sweet acrid perfume of wild geranium, more taste than smell. The fierce glare of the day sinks imperceptibly into a cooler and a steadier light; there is no sign of sunset yet awhile; only the high crowned ridges of the western heights break his force. And presently the dust on the patient road-side foliage seems half shaken off, and tints and shades creep out on surfaces which the blatant heat of midday had frightened into an insignificant blur of neutral colours.

Here the cactus stops for a while, why, I do not know: there are many puzzles in this Himalayan botany. Why does the rhododendron grow to the very highest spot on the south and refuse to put forth a leaf at any elevation to the north? Why does the blue poppy of Tibet despise utterly the identical rocks and ledges, offered at the same height south of the Tang la? Why does the bamboo stop with a certainty and cleanness at a height of 9,500 feet on the south, which enables the Bhutanese to use it as their frontier mark, while two hundred miles away on a hill side at Lhasa a flourishing twenty-five foot hedge keeps the cold from the Chief Wizard's house, nearly 13,000 feet above the sea?

You will cross the bridge at Rang-po; and there you will stay the night, sleeping under mosquito nets for the last time. The stream you have just crossed you

will meet again under very different circumstances, but some suggestion of the clear emerald of its ice-bound pools at Lagyap still lingers as it joins the snow-stained



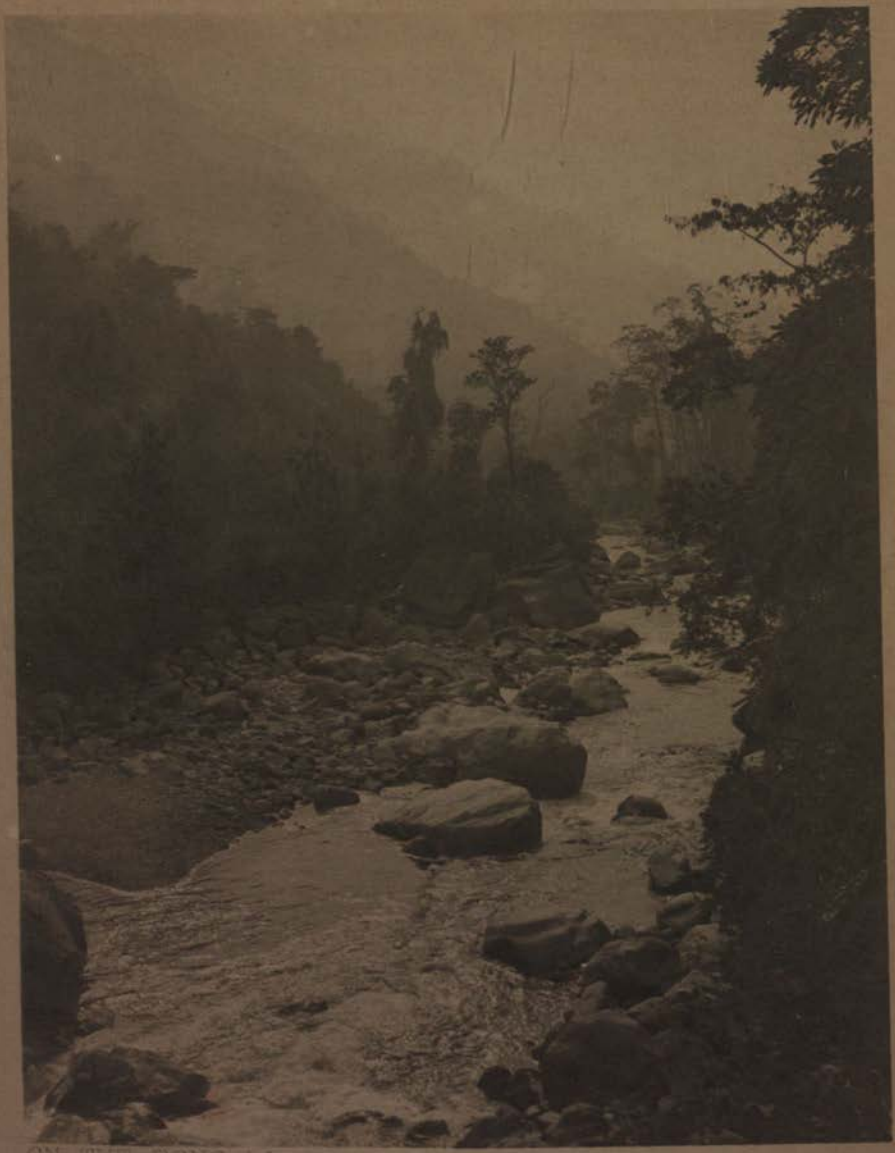
A tributary of the Rang-po.

waters of the Rang-po. Still going on, your path lies on the left bank of the latter river, chiefly bound up against the side of the river cliff. Six miles will take you to the last river that you will have to follow till Tibet is reached. The Rong-ni is, after all, the most

beautiful stream that you will have tramped beside. Here the two vegetations mingle, and the orange groves of Dowgago mark the transfusion of the two. Here the maples and the violets begin, the geraniums and the daphnes, the lobelias and the honeysuckles, the ivies and the elder-trees—the first outposts of the European zone. But we have not yet lost the creepers and hydrangeas of the south before the first azalea-like rhododendrons bear promise of the shrub that, towering at the 7,000-foot line to eighty feet in height and dwindling again to three or four inches on the pass, will remain with us till the frontier line is crossed. Here the bamboos insinuate themselves at last, and as the road sweeps up and up, the undergrowth rises here and there into the magnificence of the tree fern, and every corner betrays a fresh scene of luxuriance and grace. Sometimes the bank opposite rises steep as a precipice and red as an old English garden wall, veiled with overhanging creepers and rich with green moss in every crevice and on every ledge: elsewhere the bank breaks away into a wide slope of tangled jungle, clothed with small ponds of greenery where the need of the dotted white huts has cleared, levelled and sown. Here the first tender rice tips peep above the mud. Round the echoing, waterworn curves of rock overhung by trees and screw-pines, hanging on, God knows how, to the bare face of the rock, crossing some small stream rustling under its canopy of shade, still mounting every mile, the track goes on, until the last bridge is crossed and the long splendid zig-zags of the new road to Gangtok, which no one uses, seam the hill in front. The barest novice knows the short cuts, and with your ears cracking every twenty minutes, you clamber up the old stony road, which

On the Rong li.

THIS IS VERY CHARACTERISTIC OF THE SCENERY OF SIKKIM VALLEYS. COLOURS (RECEDING FROM FOREGROUND) *Chestnut-brown, steel-blue, granite, myrtle-green, sage-green and lightening greys.*



ON THE RONG LI

saves two miles in six. At last the Residency, or rather the foliage which conceals it, seems less hopelessly distant than it did, and coming out again upon the white, well-made road, one climbs at an easy gradient to the capital of Sikkim. On the left is the deep green cutting of the river we have crossed, a league in width and lost

A bridge over the Rong-ni.

behind a ten-mile distant corner. The double Residency gates open and shut behind one, and through the tree ferns and the dying bamboos of the drive* one emerges into the English roses and clean, short turf of Mrs. Claude White's home-made Paradise.

The Residency brings a whiff of England into this

* All the bamboos of the Gangtok district fertilised and died in 1904.

far distant country. It is a substantial and handsome little building of stone, roofed in red of such a well-remembered tint, that it is some time before one realises that tiles are impossible at Gangtok. Hitherto it has been the end of all northern travel in India, and it must have been curious for the rare travellers who made demands on Claude White's famous hospitality, to find this dainty gem of a house, furnished from Oxford Street within, and without encircled with the tree ferns and orchids of this exquisite valley. It is a perfect spot. Far off to the west rise the pinnacles of Nur-sing and Pan-dim ; to the north there hangs in heaven that most exquisite of all peaks of earth, Siniolchu.

Beyond Gangtok, before the expedition came, there was no road. Indeed, a road wide enough for carts was finished only eighteen months ago up to the gates of the Residency. Further on, it is still a bridle track hugging the side of the hill, barely thrusting its way through the dense wall of bamboo which rises on either side like the green walls through which Moses led his flying countrymen.* Overhead the giant rhododendrons branch upwards to the sky, high as a London house. No one who knows the rhododendron of England can form the faintest conception of what these monsters of the upper hills are like. The trees at Haigh Hall and at Cobham are regarded by their owners with some complacency. But in size they are mere shrubs compared with their brothers of Sikkim, and in beauty they are left far behind. "I know nothing of the kind," says Hooker, "which exceeds in beauty the flowering branch of *rhododendron argenteum*, with its wide-spreading

* The colour, too, contributes to the fantasy, for here the blue-leaved Hooker's bamboo grows more freely among its commoner brethren than anywhere else in the Himalayas.

foliage and glorious mass of flowers." This variety, though it does not grow to the height of its brethren, is the finest of them all. The enormous glossy leaves, powdered with white underneath, are thrown with a careless grace around the splendid blossoms, arranged with all the delicate looseness and lightness which none

On the Rong-ni.

but the Master Gardener could give to this royal and massive foliage. The actual florets of the commoner kinds are undoubtedly poorer than those of the English variety, and there is an ineffective conical arrangement of their azalea-like blossoms which the Englishman notices at once. But in their masses, crimson, lemon and white, they star the dark green steamy recesses

of the path, and, excepting only the magnolia, are the most striking flowers upon the road.

These magnolias are strange plants. They seem to turn colour as they reach the limit of their growth, and the pure white is lost in a tinge of purple. Unlike the magnolias which occasionally overpower the scents of an entire rectory garden in England, the waxen flowers grow on naked lilac stickery. The wide, enamelled leaves, which seem so indispensable at home, are gone. I do not know whether they appear later, but the magnolia seems to be outside ordinary rules of plant life. One species has even the depressing habit of dropping its flowers unopened on the ground below. Oaks grow here, though in a chastened way. An English tree which takes fuller advantage of the rank vegetable mould and steamy hothouse climate of Sikkim is the juniper. This, which is best known to the inhabitants of towns in the shape of "cedar" pencils, grows to a height of forty or fifty feet, and Mr. White has, on two occasions, made an attempt to develop a regular trade with the manufacturers. They admitted that the wood sent was as good as any they could buy, but the contracts they had entered into for the supply of this wood bound them for some years to come. Another industrial product of this jungle is madder, and the dark crimson robes of both Tibetan churches, Red and Yellow alike—for the distinction is shown only in the cap—owe their richness to the hill sides of Sikkim. Elephant creeper winds up the forest trees, the huge leaves nuzzling into the bark all round like a swarm of gigantic bees. The common white orchid, which is wired to make a two-guinea spray in London, is a weed at Gangtok. Its quaintly writhen blossoms of snow hang overhead in

such profusion that one welcomes a shyer blossom, trumpet shaped, and of the colour and coolness of a lemon-ice. The orchids are not the only epiphytes; other parasites than they crown the living branch with their coronals of leaves, more lovely than the trees they feed upon.

The Residency, Gangtok.

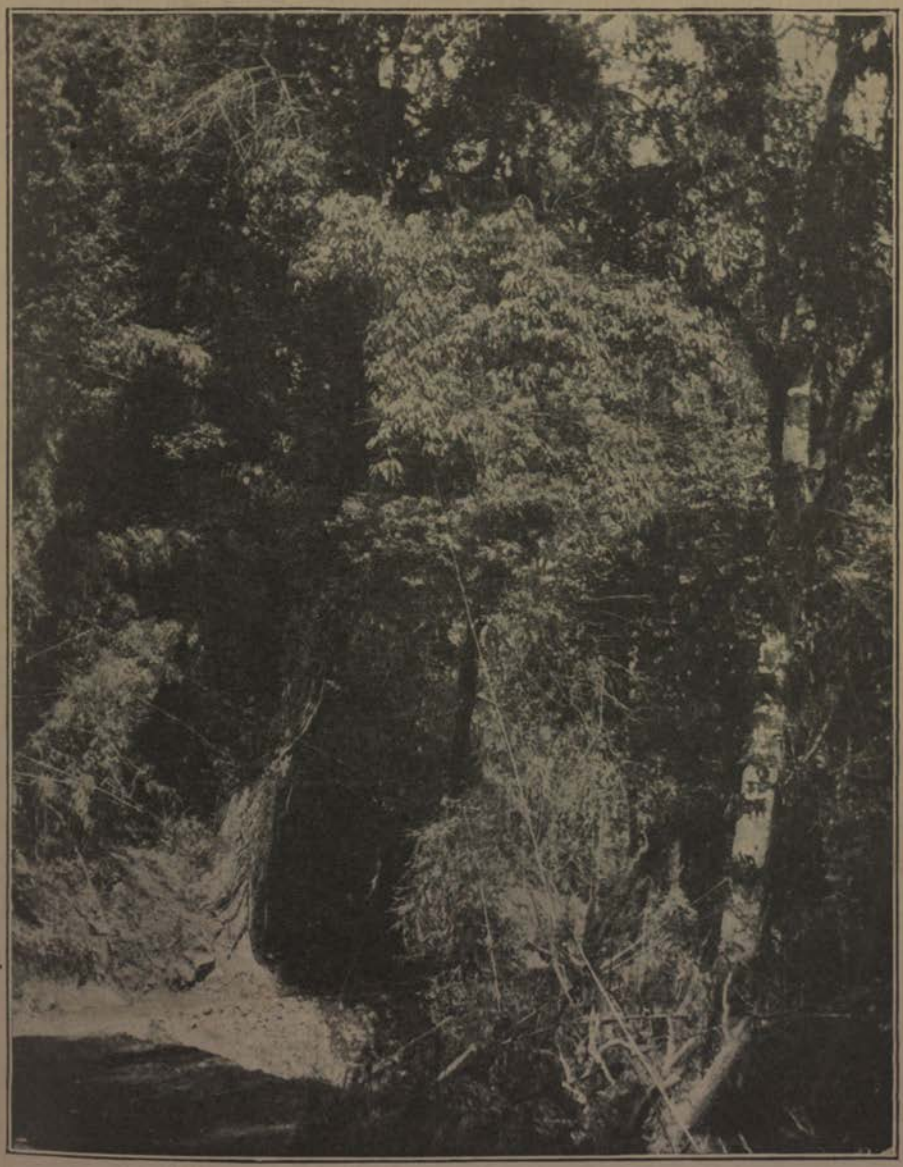
The game here is very scanty: the reason is not uninteresting. For dormant or active, visible or invisible, the curse of Sikkim waits for its warm-blooded visitor. The leeches of these lovely valleys have been described again and again by travellers. Unfortunately the description, however true in every particular, has, as a rule, but wrecked the reputation of the chronicler.

Englishmen cannot understand these pests of the hot mountain-side, which appear in March, and exist like black threads fringing every leaf till September kills them in myriad millions.* Spruce grows here under a Latin name, and the writer enters thereupon a layman's protest. It takes away half the interest of new and tropical vegetation if the only names that one can be told for some magnificent or graceful thing are Latin atrocities, generally embedding some uncouth Teutonic surname. In a country like Sikkim one's resentment is doubled; when a good English word lies ready to hand, why should it be necessary to call the spruce tree *abies excelsa,* or, worse still, *Smithiana?*

Leaving Gangtok, the last reminder of the West, one strikes out east by north to make the final climb which takes one out of the Empire. For five miles the road is—or rather, until the rains came, was—a good one. Beyond that, in spite of much hard work of pioneers and sappers, the track is bad indeed. Karponang,† when I returned through it for the last time, was a far-stretched hamlet, lying in long tiered sheds against the mountain wall, and the last pretence of a road along which a wheel can go is here frankly abandoned. Beyond it is a section of the road which for months was the despair of the engineers. "The tenth to the thirteenth

* It is worth a passing note that these unwelcome visitors can be driven from the nostrils of the cattle exactly as MacComglinney enticed the "lawless beast" from the throat of King Cathal. A bowl of warm milk at the cow's nose, a little slip-knot, and a quick hand are all that is required. Fourteen or fifteen successively have been thus taken from the nostrils of one unfortunate heifer.

† The name Karponang was suggested for the ten-mile stage by the writer. From a perilously insufficient knowledge of Tibetan, *karpo* seemed to mean "white" and *nang* was clearly a "house" and as some shorter title was needed for the political officer's bantling, Karponang stuck, though it is not, perhaps, a particularly idiomatic rendering of what it was intended to mean.



Rhododendron trees on the road above Gangtok, about eighty feet high.

mile" passed into proverbial use as a standard of utter badness and instability. When the road was cut out of the rock it was too narrow for the easy passage of a loaded beast; where it was cut out of the hill soil, a night's rain sent it down the khud. Where it crossed a cataract, the bridge gave more trouble than a quarter of a mile of honest rock. Where, as it too often did, it jutted straight out on bamboo brackets from the side of the cliff, 800 feet above the whispering stream below, the bamboos used to rot with a rapidity unknown elsewhere. Landslips were the rule rather than the exception. The whole length was sprayed with continual rivulets through the rank vegetation which overhung the track; all afternoon these washed away the mould with which the bald sharp rock-points of the blasted road were covered; all night they formed a coat of ice which made it impossible for man or beast to stand or go upon it. Accidents upon this stretch were painfully common; two men were killed by a dynamite explosion, though in common fairness to even this unfortunate exhibition of nature, she can hardly be held responsible for the folly of men who dry their dynamite at a fire. Four men were overwhelmed here by a gush of liquid mud, just when three weeks' hard work upon the road at that point was finished. One man slipped down, or may be he was kicked—for the mules disliked this "trang" with almost reasonable intuition—and the loss of mules near Karponang was heavier than anywhere else upon the road. On a winter afternoon a mile an hour was good going along this stage. Any attempt to ride was out of the question; painfully prodding one's way with a khud-stick, one scrambled up or glissaded down over the unfenced ice-slides thinly veiled with dirt. One's

beast was led behind one with mincing steps and starting eyes. It was a bad road ; and the noise of waters many hundred feet sheer below was always painfully present in the ears. Lagyap was the next halting-place, hanging over the gulf like an eagle's nest.

Beyond Lagyap, the road, as a road, did not exist. The ascent was tolerably steep, and one either strode from boulder to boulder, or trod, at the risk of one's ankles, between the stones. This, after five miles, is wearisome work. And even the sight of Lagyap Pool, the most beautiful basin of ice-bound emerald-water that I have ever seen, fails to cheer one up. Up under the pine trees, slipping and staggering, where no road pretended to have been ever cleared, we reached Changu Lake at last. Here we were clear of trees ; the dwarf rhododendrons ran along the ground in acre patches, a foot in height, but the last tree barely showed its head over the great natural dam which shuts in the waters of the lake. One leaves a land of timber ; one comes to a land of rock, and the dividing line is as clean as if it had been the work of man. Behind us, also, we left one of the most magnificent views in the world, for the deep green valleys of Sikkim, like some loosely thrown length of myrtle green velvet, lie out for the last time many thousands of feet below, stretching on till the grey gauze of sheer distance overtook the tint, and only the pure, clean argent of those Himalayan snows, which have no rival on this planet, lifted themselves into the blue.

It is an austere country into which we are now moving. The lake is a mile long and perhaps 600 yards in width ; nearly all the year round it is frozen, though in the bitterest days of mid-winter, when the

The path through Sikkim cut out of the cliff side: rhododendron roots overhang the "trang." To the left the rock falls eight hundred feet sheer. Part of the "10–13 mile" track.

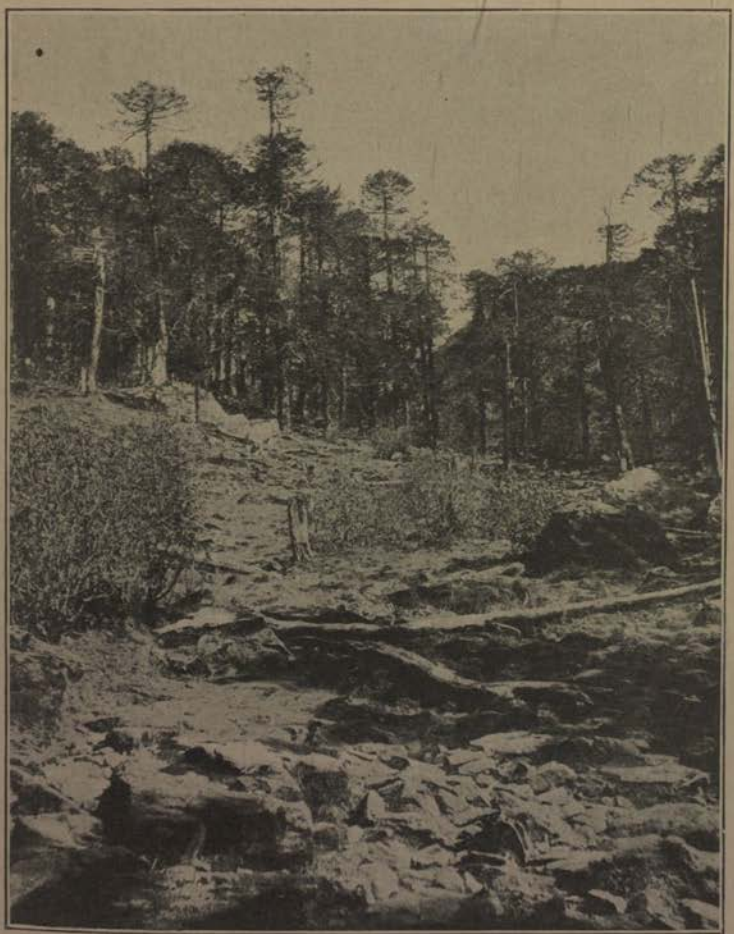
thermometer is nightly going down to 5° or 10° below zero, there is always on the southern side of the lake an unfrozen pool. The cliffs sweep down into the basin, bare and unlovely. To the east, whither our road still is to run, the nakedness of a steep ascent of wearisome boulders is barely qualified by the stunted rhododendron

Lagyap: the clouds hanging in the gulf are just seen to the right.

growth. At Changu there is now a comfortable bungalow, and only those in dire necessity will fail to stop the night. The hardest work of all the road to Lhasa lies before us on the morrow, and though I have more than once passed through from Chumbi without a halt, there is no doubt that the exertion can only be justified by real urgency. Leaving Changu in the morning the

traveller, considering the very short way he knows he has to go, will demur at the earliness of his start. But there will be no mercy shown him. He will be allowed, perhaps, to ride for 500 yards; after that he will prefer to trust to his own feet until all except the last three miles of the stage have been covered. Climbing over these boulder-strewn surfaces would be bad at the sea-level; here, where the air is so thin, it soon becomes a burden to pull one's solid body over the heartless obstacles. If the ascent be at all steep, the newcomer will sit down every twenty or thirty yards. His muscles are not tired, and he regains his strength in a surprisingly short time, but at the moment he sinks upon some friendly stone, he thinks that another step forward would be his last. This is a peculiarity which it is impossible to describe to those who have never been more than a thousand feet or so above sea-level. The lungs seem foolishly inadequate to the task imposed upon them; the pluckiness of one's own heart is an unmistakable, but somewhat terrifying, symptom, for it goes on beating with increasing strokes till it shakes the walls of the body; and not the written testimony of the leading heart expert in London will convince you that it is not on the point of bursting its envelope. Then you may be thankful indeed if you escape mountain sickness. If that should come upon you, your bitterest enemy will lead your horse for you. I have seen cases of mountain sickness in which amazement overwhelmed even one's sympathy. I have seen men in such a state, that they seem to have every symptom of habitual drunkenness; all the limbs shiver, and in the bloodless face the eyes have that extraordinary look of insanity which is, I think, caused by an inability to focus them. The

speech comes with difficulty, and in one case that I saw the mental coherence was as obviously at fault as the physical. But strange though the appearance is to the



Between Lagyap and Changu on the Natu la track.

outsider, for the sufferer himself I do not suppose that there can well be condensed into three or four hours such an agony of aching. The brain seems cleft into two, and the wedge, all blunt and splintery, is hammered

into it as by mallet strokes at every pulsation of the heart. Partial relief is secured by a violent fit of sickness (which, however, is not always forthcoming), and through all this you have still to go on, to go on, to go on.

Here, too, the wind exacts its toll, and drives a cold, aching shaft into your liver. This is no slight matter, for the toil of climbing is excessive, and the exertion of covering half a mile will drench a man with perspiration. He then sits down, and this strong wind plays upon him to his own enjoyment, and to the destruction of his lungs.*

Up one still goes till the lake lies a mile behind one, still untouched by the first rays of the dawn. Often a steep descent as treacherous to the foot as the ascent has to be made. One of the most tedious and tiresome things about this track is the wearisome necessity, which awaits you round every corner, of losing at a stroke two-thirds of the advantage that you have just won by an hour's hard work. It appeals to the mind, and shortens the temper at a time when any friction in the human microcosm is waste of strength. One resents the man who first pointed out the track. One is inclined to think, that had one only a few hours more, one could oneself find a far more economical path than that by which one is now obliged to go. This, a very common failing, as I have noticed myself, perhaps indicates that one's common sense also is a little affected in these high altitudes. Two miles from Changu is the only level portion of the day's march. One goes across the little plain, and makes for exactly the one point which a stranger would decide to be the most impossible in all the amphitheatre.

* Pneumonia caused more deaths than any other disease.

Changu Lake on the Natu la route. Dwarf rhododendrons alone grow here. Far down beyond the edge of the lake are the wooded valleys of Sikkim.

The Sebu la is beyond question the most difficult point of all the road from Siliguri to the end, a sheer wall of precipitous rock, springing up from the level plain. On looking closely one can see some symptoms of a zigzagging road climbing upwards, and by those zigzags you have to go, for the rock itself allows no other path. This is the most heart-breaking climb of all the day. You may, perhaps, here overtake the slow, painful tramp of the coolies sent on, even before your own rising, from the last stage; pack animals are impossible on a road like this. The strange thick-calved, patient men, carrying burdens which no Englishman would shoulder, move steadily onwards over their six-mile stage.*

One climbs at last to the crest of the Sebu la. One goes thirty yards round a projecting rock, and at once one is obliged to scramble as best as one can down a declivity which lands one 400 feet below the level of the little plain from which one had climbed to the top of the Sebu la. It all seems so unnecessary, so wanton. At the bottom, one crosses the bed of a river closely packed with rough and heavy water-worn rock, but no stonier than the road leading down to it on either side. There is still another steady rise to the heights

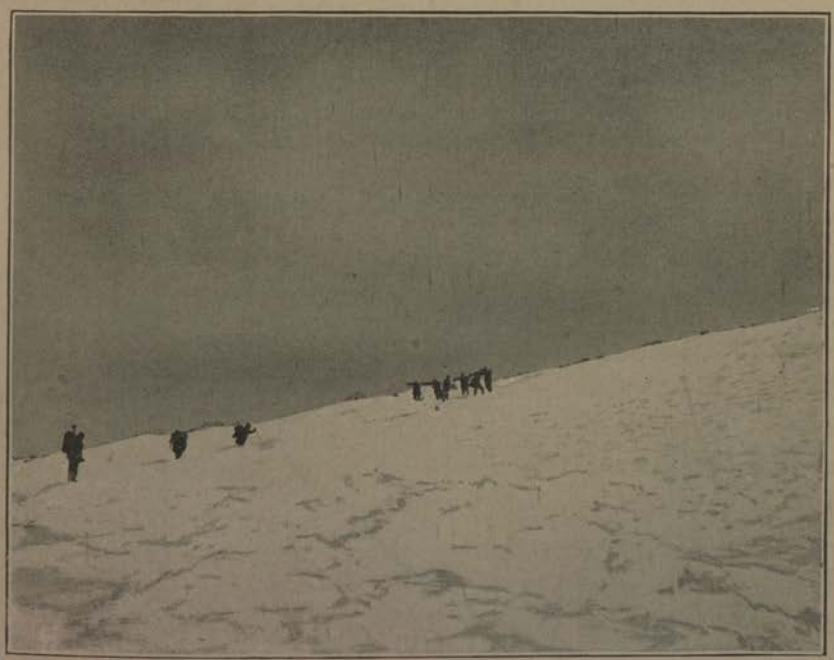
* The weight that these Central Asian coolies can carry is astounding; the ordinary load is from 80 to 100 lbs., nearly double a man's pack on the level plains of India. But these Bhutias, when paid by the job, do not hesitate to double and even treble the load. I have myself seen a man carry into camp three telegraph poles on his back, each weighing a trifle under 90 lbs. Further east the tea porters of Se-chuan are notorious, and loads of 350 lbs. are not unknown. Setting aside the story of a Bhutia lady who carried a piano on her head up to Darjeeling from the plains as too well known to be likely to be exact, the record seems to be held by a certain Chinese coolie who undertook, in his own time, to transport a certain casting, needed for heavy machinery, inland to its owner. The casting weighed 570 lbs., and the carriage was slowly but successfully accomplished.

An English bricklayer is forbidden, by the rules of his union, to carry more than 14 lbs.

of the Natu la. One seems to have wandered in a vast amphitheatre of rock and stone for days. The homely bungalow at Changu has faded among the recollections of another year, and you are wise if you do not ask how long it will still take to climb to the summit of these weary hills. Just about this time, you begin to realise why Tibet has remained a shut-up country for so long. The transportation of an army and, what is far more wonderful, its daily supply across the water-shed between the Tista and the Ammo chu will probably remain an unrivalled feat of transport and supply in the history of warfare. In old days, marches, which would to-day be regarded as impossible, were somehow carried out. But we have never been told the loss of life that accompanied the ultimate arrival in India of Genghiz Khan, Alexander or Nadir Shah. But the road dips downwards for the last time at the half-way stage, and we are free to make the best of the remaining clamber which lies now uninterruptedly before us to the pass.

Much has been made of the added horrors of ice and snow. As a matter of fact, bare-footed though the coolies are, it was a merciful relief for them when the snow lay packed into a kindly carpet blanketing the boulders under foot. The only difficulty then was said to be that of losing the road. Only those who have been over the Natu la can quite understand the grim foolishness of speaking of losing the road over it. It is true that there is a track. Probably that track, so far as it can be distinguished from the hill-side, above and below, represents as good a means of getting to the top as any other. But so far as the ground is concerned there is almost nothing to choose; and not the least remarkable thing is the steady persistent refusal

of the coolies to use the easy zigzag path which has been made for them over the last 200 yards to the top. It is roughly true to say that no hill coolie will deign to use an easier path than that which goes straight to his journey's end, though one might have



The summit of the Natu la.

expected that after a long and wearying climb over this heart-breaking mountain side, the chance of an easy and steady climb for even so short a distance would have been eagerly accepted.

We have now reached 14,300 feet, and before we climb the last remaining steps, it is worth while to turn back and watch for the last time the scenes through which we have come so painfully. Away to the left a gigantic bastion of rock carries the sister road over the

Jelep la, and away to the south-west Ling-tu, on the crest of the 6,000 feet precipice up which the road is zigzagged, can be seen in the clear air. The Jelep Pass itself is hidden by the bulk of the range, though only three miles away. A little lake lies frozen in the stony bowl up the sides of which we have just come. Far below its edge falls another mighty hollow, and yet we do not see a blade or leaf. Only beyond and below, peering through one of the little crevasses in the ringed hills, there is the dark mantle of the Sikkim woods. One turns one's back upon it for the last time, and gains the summit, where three heaps of stones, piled by pious travellers, support a flagged bush, the usual ornament of every pass in the country. One takes another step, and one is in the Chumbi Valley.

The first sight of Tibet, thus seen, is not without a sombre interest of its own. It is at once obvious that the general level of the country is very much higher than that of Sikkim. The mass of Chumolhari fills in the end of the valley. Glittering in the bitter air, it rises thirty-five miles away, though the richer aquamarine of its crevasses can be seen from where we stand. The ridges and ranges swarm between, intersected with the courses of rivers invisible. All is bare and dull, but a thousand feet below us the dripping pines send their single spies up towards the barren and unlovely path.

There is something fascinating about the mere sight of a long, slow line of burdened coolies, in spite of the miserable cold that almost prevents your watching anything. Up there, high above the most venturesome pines, where only the dwarf rhododendron, two or three inches high, survives here and there beneath the shelter of a friendly rock just piercing the two-

inch snow that fell last night, the laden team crawls slowly to the top. The green and golden lichen spreads over the dull and bitter crags of gneiss, and under foot the tense stiff bents of frozen grass prick themselves scantily through the dirty ice. Up hither the coolies thrust their way painfully, and the thick, duffle-clad

The first sight of Tibet from the crest of the Natu la. Chumolhari (24,000 ft.) in the distance.

figures in a long line zigzag up the side of the pass, swaying from side to side under their burdens as they gain a bare foothold on the blunt rocks; the sky is overcast and this vivid cold searches through everything, in spite of the thick winter clothing which has been liberally supplied. Butterflies, birds and beasts are alike fled. Only a lammergeier floats still in the air some

300 feet below, wheeling slowly with motionless wings, and far down in the gulf there is a scurry of lavender snow pigeons. The pass itself is nothing but elemental rock, and the Indian file of men drops down again as quickly as it can into the stiller cold of the sheltered side of the peak. One goes down. At first lichen and stunted moss alone mask the coarseness of the huge boulders; lower down the scarlets and reds of the barberry and a few stunted bushes of feathery juniper, as high as one's hand, come up as forerunners of the fast-thickening vegetation of the gorge. Two thousand feet below the pass, while one is still sliding and scrambling over frozen washes of curving ice across the track, the silver firs and stunted junipers crowd beside the zigzag path that still leaps from rock to rock. Of undergrowth there is but little, even when the mountain-ash and silver fir have given place to the *Pinus excelsa* and a silver-grey variety of the deodora, and the air is heavy with warm resin. Behind, fifteen miles away on the Sikkim side of the pass, the dull roar of blasting may perhaps remind one of the wide ten-foot road which the Government are still intending to throw across this terrible sierra.

The coolies still crawl upwards and over. Compared with the western face, the descent of the Natu la on the Tibetan side is a comparatively easy thing. The road soon runs at a gentle gradient over the spurs which buttress the precipices that frown over Sikkim, and after a mile you may, if you come in winter, get thankfully upon your pony once again. The track runs straight and level along the mountain-side, and you may wonder why the engineers have corduroyed the road. There seems so little reason for this fearful

waste of time and timber. But if it is your luck to retrace your steps when the rains are in full swing, you will wonder no longer.

There is no end to the devilish ingenuity with which Nature has strewn this path with obstacles. That one which hitherto we had hardly found was awaiting us after all. And you may have to get wearily off

A level piece of the Yak la road.

your pony once again to pick your way unsteadily from rock to rock, in a sea of mud which defies description. Two-foot deep, black, stinking, slippery, your pony has to make the best of it. And once in every ten paces you too will sound it to the knee. Not a mere stretch of a quarter of a mile is this disheartening morass; before the transverse logs were laid there were five miles of this unending slide and slip and splash

to be overcome. Corduroy itself is no luxurious floor. Your beast will like it only a little better than the quagmire he has scrambled through. The wood is slippery, and though the ribbing of the road prevents a long slide it ensures a short one at almost every step.

The path on the bare mountain-side, bad as it was, is better than that which threads the close pine trunks of Champi-tang. Torrential rain may wash a path away, but nothing so entirely ruins a made track as the drip from trees. There is something about the slow persistence that does harm which even a water-spout could not compass. And if by this time you have any spirit of curiosity left in you, you may notice that the corduroy work upon the road coincides with those very parts, which at the first blush you might consider most protected by foliage overhead. It is getting late now in the afternoon, and you will thank your good fortune in having as companions unfeeling men who made you rise at five. The worst is over, and you can stumble along at more than two miles an hour. The hill-sides opposite become clothed with forestry, and after an hour or two you will find yourself before the blazing hearth of the luxurious bungalow at Champi-tang.

On the following day, you go down to Chumbi. You make your way along a greasy path, now passing underneath a lonely little shrine, half hidden by the trees, now emerging among the bared, charred trunks of the pine army which was burnt three years ago. Doubling the spurs again and again, you make your way at a fairly level altitude, until a Bhutia-tent marks the division between the official main road by the Kag-ué monastery, and the short cut over the hills to Chema. Down the first you elect to go. The road

The interior of the Kag-ué Monastery above Rinchengong.

is longer, but the road is easier, and you have not yet acquired either the mental attitude or, what is more important, the muscles of a hill man. Through junipers and birch you pass out to the bare hill-side, and descend sharply to the monastery.

This is a curious place. It is the most important religious community in the valley. It is a special favourite with the Dalai Lama, and when, some years ago, owing to certain scandals which were, unfortunately, too well known in the valley to be disregarded, the older monastery in these parts was broken up, the lamas were permitted to build a far more magnificent temple within a mile of the scene of their misdoings. Service is going on as you enter the courtyard. They will pay no attention to you if you go into the shrine itself—that is, the monks will not. Only the acolyte children will gaze, round-eyed, at the unknown white men, while their mouths still move with the shrill and simple cadence of the chanted office. Now and again a bell is rung, or a drum beaten with the sickle-shaped stick. Once in a while the long, eight-foot trumpets emit a ponderous blast of discordance. Tea is handed round continually, and the chant pauses now and again to allow the presiding lama to monotone a passage from the Buddhist scriptures. At the further end, in the darkness, lighted by the pale beads of butter-lamps, sits the gilded image of Gautama, half-hidden by "katags" or scarves.

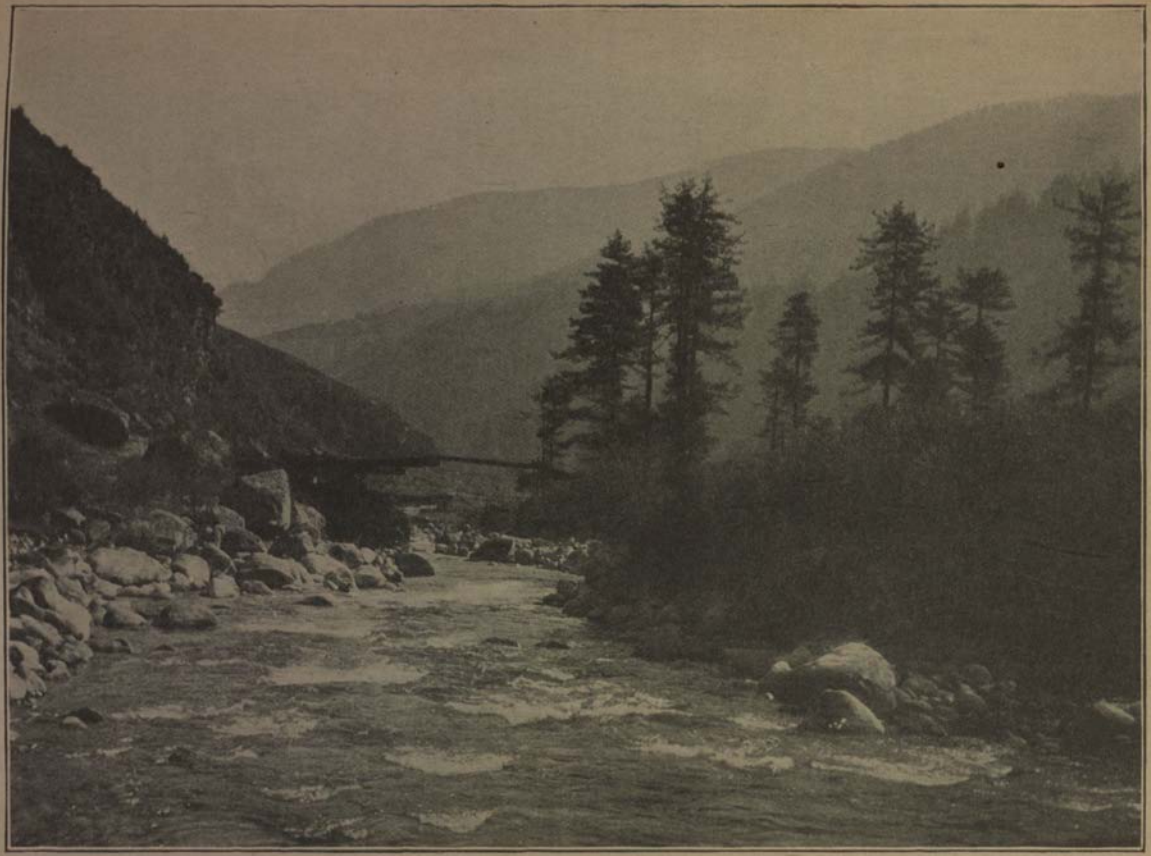
Leaving the monastery, the track flings itself down the steep sides of a hollow, and at last comes out upon the good and welcome level of the Chumbi road. We have almost reached the end of the first stage of the long journey.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHUMBI VALLEY.

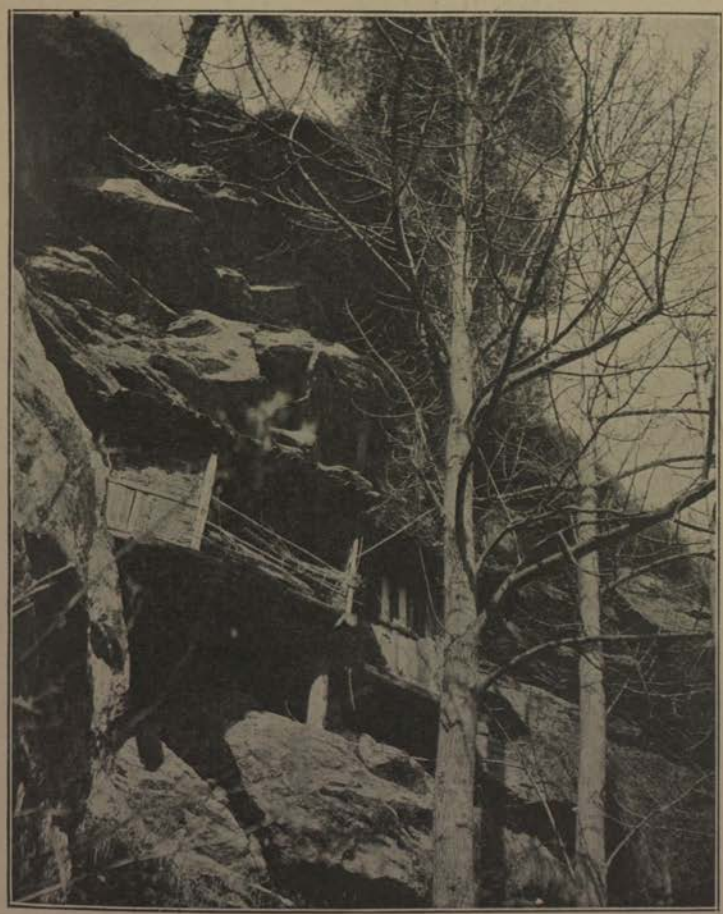
BEFORE the coming of this Mission, no white man had ever known the Chumbi Valley. It is true that in 1888 the British force penetrated as far as the palace of the Maharajah of Sikkim, about two and a half miles from Rinchengong, where the old Jelep highway comes down from India into the valley. But beyond that point, up to Phari itself at the mouth of the valley, no European had ever penetrated through this most exquisite little enclave. Bogle and Turner made their way, indeed, over the Tang la, but they went up by Buxar, Paro, and the Phari Pass through Bhutan. This was one of the roads suggested for the use of the expedition; but it necessitated the early abandonment of the railway and the crossing of difficult rivers before the Bhutan frontier was reached; and finally the susceptibilities of the good people of Bhutan had to to be lulled to rest.

Bhutan, in its way, is almost as much shut up as Tibet, and in this seclusion the Government of India most cordially acquiesces. The incoming of a body of armed men into their territory would necessarily have been regarded by the authorities of the Bhutanese as an act to be regarded with suspicion, perhaps even to be prevented, if possible, by armed force. Nothing of course was further from our intention than to



Rinchengong bridge in the Chumbi Valley.

interfere in any way whatever with the existing friendly relations between Bhutan and India. Equally necessary was it for us to make this expedition with the assent and sympathy of all the northern races,



The hermit's cell in the rocks above Rinchengong.

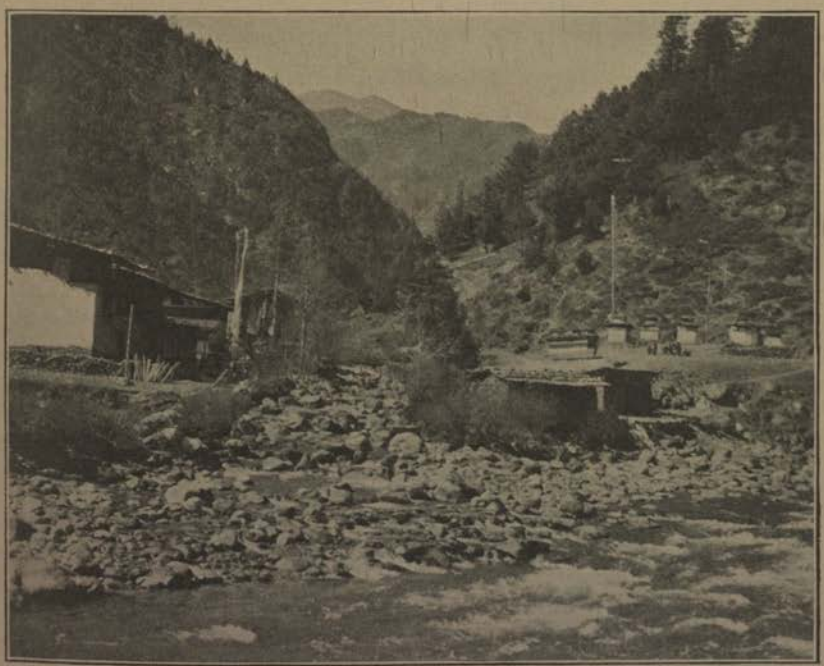
politically under the influence of India, who professed spiritual subjection to the Grand Lama of Lhasa. It is true, as we shall see later, that the favour of making a road through the small portion of Bhutanese territory was subsequently asked and willingly granted.

But this was essentially and, what is more to the point, apparently also a different thing from the passage of troops.

The road to the Jelep was therefore at first adopted for more reasons than the mere fact that so much at least of the long journey was familiar from our experience in 1888. In the last chapter I have given some description of the road between Rang-po and Chumbi. From this point onwards the interest was doubled for those who penetrated for the first time through its gorges. From the Maharajah's palace there is a view of the windings of the valley to the point where the flat alluvial spur of New Chumbi juts out from the east; the river here makes a final turn and the high wooded shoulder of the hill above cuts off all view of the features of the upper reaches of the river. In this part of the valley there was not perhaps very much to attract the eye. Certainly in winter, when the first sight of it was obtained, there was nothing to suggest the extraordinary beauty of the brief summer months. The hills come down steeply on either side, elbowing the quick Ammo chu into a tortuous and almost torrential course. Rinchengong itself is a straggling hamlet with a few good houses in it, originally collected there, not only as a station on the high road to India, but as a convenient colony for the service of the monks of the Kag-ué monastery high on the hill above. The poorer houses are huddled together, dirty and unkempt, in the bed of the stream which here flows down from Ya-tung a mile or two up the valley. The better houses are removed a few hundred yards away. Some, across the river, are attached to fertile fields, and two, at least, on this side have evidently belonged to owners of some

taste and refinement. In the middle of the town, the large handsome house of Ugyen Kazi stands up brave with fluttering prayer flags beneath the steep sandy ridge, crowned with the fir trees which jut out and protect Rinchengong from the northern blast down the valley.

Up above the houses, just where this promontory



Chema Village. The descent from the Yak la to the Chumbi Valley is seen in the centre.

joins its parent cliff, is hidden in a cleft of the rock one of the hermit cells which are to be found scattered in the most unlikely places over the length and breadth of the country. This one is a crazy structure of wood and woven bamboo, precariously perched upon a wooden stage, wherever the rock has afforded no purchase. There the occupant of the cell spends an uneventful

and useless life. He takes no interest and no share in the doings of the little village at his feet. Their prosperity or their trouble, their sickness or their health, are alike of no consequence to him. He does not even pretend to pray for them. He only comes among them for the purpose of silently collecting the pious offerings of those whose charity is as meaningless as his own life.

From Rinchengong the road runs northward along the right bank of the river, flat and straight to Chema. Half a mile before Chema is reached, the new road over the Natu la descends between two narrow, stone-built walls. Chema (which is pronounced "Pé-ma" by the people of Gangtok, to whom this little place is of some repute because within its boundaries the two roads from Gangtok to Chumbi and the north descend) is a town as like Rinchengong as one pea is like another. The presiding Kazi is Norzan, and his house is the first that one meets coming down into the town by the valley of the Yak la. Across a triangular market-place is a shrine with a long row of small prayer wheels, framed behind a palisade against the wall. These the pious inhabitants turn idly as they walk past on their way to the bridge, and the dirt of many generations of Tibetan hands has almost clogged the flutings of the handles. Under an overhanging balcony on the right was a huge Tibetan mastiff with a red woollen collar, so chained up to the rafters above that only immediately below the knot can he place all four legs on the ground at once. He is, of course, a bad-tempered, mangy brute. But he is, perhaps, of interest as being, like the hermit's cave, the first of an interminable number of his fellows in Tibet. There is a curiosity nailed up against a wooden pillar over his head, in the shape of a six-pointed shao

horn.* Mr. Claude White has its fellow in the Residency at Gangtok. Across the bridge are two or three chortens, beneath towering prayer poles, attracting the eyes, and distracting the path of the good people, who may only pass round them from left to right.

Immediately round the point is the Chinese village, where the transition to more familiar buildings and

Chema Village. Mme. Dor-dém's house to the left ; beyond it Norzan Kazi's.

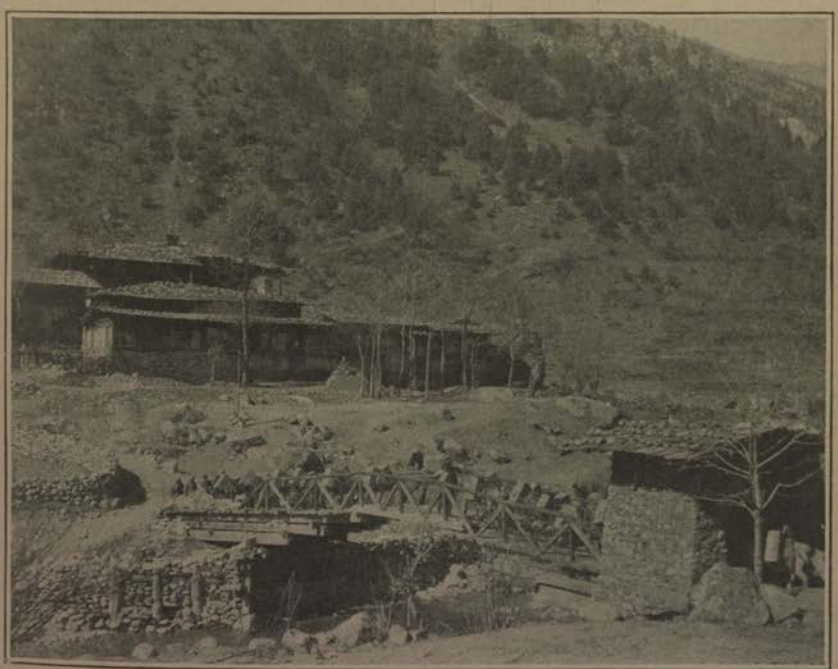
customs is very striking. The Chinese in Tibet take to themselves Tibetan wives, for just so long as their exile lasts. It must always be remembered that to the Chinese, residence in Tibet is always regarded as an exile. They look upon themselves as the over-lords of

* The shao horn has five points. So universal is this rule that the Lhasans distinguish the species as the Shao-a-ru-chu, or "ten-pointed" stag.

the country, and do not scruple to make the fullest use of the privileges which their position gives them. The right of demanding transport, both by man and beast, is rigorously exacted, and it is one of the absurdities of the whole situation, that a race nominally and locally dominant, but politically without power or influence of any kind, should still look down with undisguised contempt upon the people whom they have shown themselves wholly unable to manage. The children of these temporary marriages vary their nationality with their sex. The girls are Tibetans, the boys are Chinamen—with a difference; for special names are in use to indicate these hybrids.

As one rides through, the old familiar smell of China usurps the musk and grease and incense of Tibet. The villages are perhaps more cleanly than those of the people of the country, and this, to those who know how filthy Chinese villages can be, will suggest some notion of the amazing dirt of everything Tibetan. Beyond the Chinese village, the road runs beside a few fields, and after about a mile makes a deviation in the place of the old staired ascent over a jutting rock. Beyond that again, it crosses a little stream near a group of chortens and a disused waterwheel. On the other side of the little side valley, which opens in here, a stony descent, and two or three hundred yards of path beside the river, lead directly to the palace of the Maharajah of Sikkim. Here a wry cupola still stands above the grey, stone-weighted shingles of the roof, the only mark of royalty, or even respectability, amid the warped and drooping beams, the neglected plaster, and the diseased dogs and pigs that are now the chief features of this abandoned residence. The

river is crossed by a bridge, to which the prudence of the expedition added a hand-rail. From the left bank, as we passed on, we had a good view of the little village of Eusaka, where a brand-new little gompa still awaited the images within. At Eusaka, another bridge crosses the Ammo chu. The main road continues on the eastern



The palace of the Maharajah of Sikkim in the Chumbi Valley. The bridge opposite shows clearly Tibetan methods of construction.

side, and half a mile further, just where the Kong-bu chu rattles over its stones into the Ammo chu, the military camp of Chumbi is placed. It occupies an alluvial ledge, known in the neighbourhood as Gye-ten, and faces a wide recessed amphitheatre, where the pine trees descend in battalions from the higher unwooded slopes. Hidden away among them, one may

just see the gleam of a white wall, above which two well-grown junipers vary a little the monotony of pine. This is the Kata-tsang cell, and well it deserves its name of the "Crow's nest." It is a poor little place, far removed from the world, tended by two lamas and supported by the casual charity of Eusaka. There is nothing either beautiful or interesting within its walls—only a few dusty gods, a few dirty butter-lamps, a few uncleaned brass bottles, a few unopened books. By the light of the wintry sun, on the day on which I visited the place, a monk was making torma, or butter ornaments, for a coming feast. These torma are among the most common things in sacred use in Tibet. The butter used is strongly reinforced with lard and cow's fat, and has therefore an enormously increased stability. The material becomes almost a white wax, and the dexterity with which the ornament grows under the deft fingers of a young "traba" is extraordinary. There are, unfortunately, no words in which fully to describe the scope of design which is available for these curious erections. They are sometimes three inches high, and I have also known them over six feet. A series of ascending volutes, rosettes, spirals, flames, flutings, and beadings leads upwards to a finial or, in some cases, to the caricature of a face. The butter is tinted with four colours, white, green, red and blue, and one of the curious things about the tormas, is the cleanliness which they still preserve after being handled by fingers that are, as a rule, the dirtiest on earth.

The monk was friendly, and told me as much as my limited knowledge of Tibetan enabled me to ask. He was entirely unconcerned at our presence, and had not even taken the trouble all the time we were there to

climb down into the valley to see what we were like. This little shrine commands a fine view of the upper reach of the Ammo chu, which is not lost until the river is hidden behind the projecting spur overhanging the Chorten-karpo wall and gate. Very pleasant it was up there while a little breeze ruffled the leaves of the

Kata-tsang, or "Crow's Nest," Gompa, opposite Chumbi.

sentinel pines and a few yaks grazed between their red brown trunks. Later on, nearly all this vegetation was utterly destroyed by a forest fire. One could almost forgive the damage done for the magnificence of the sight of the blazing mountain side.

The General's house stood up in the middle distance, on the right bank of the river, three-quarters of a mile above the military camp. It was a stoutly-built house,

with a couple of well-painted rooms on the first floor, a precipitous ladder, and the usual dirt. A little temple a hundred yards away continued to be occupied by monks, indifferent to the startling change of their neighbours. The walls of this latter place are well painted, but there is nothing else of value or interest in the building.

The Tibetans have a habit (or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, in the opinion of men scantily acquainted with the language, they appear to have the habit) of giving a different name to each consecutive plot of ground. It is possible that if these names were subjected to a little examination they would in most cases prove to be merely the bewildered description of some physical peculiarity of the ground, which they would as willingly have identified by the same name in a hundred other places within a radius of a mile. It is not therefore necessary to burden the reader with all the fanciful names which are confidently reported to Indian departments of State by subordinates seeking information. Bakcham seems, however, to be the accepted name of this little village of three houses—for there is one other disreputable looking structure.

Here at Bakcham Brigadier-General Macdonald took up his quarters for the winter. It is not an unpleasant spot, though during the period which elapsed before the advance to Gyantse there was little enough promise of the exquisite beauty of July and August. Across the road, which is here separated from the house by the river, is the lonely cemetery where Lieutenant Alston lies, one of the sad but comparatively few instances of a retribution mercilessly exacted by hard work from lungs, already weakened by high altitude

The forest fire which destroyed the mountain side near Kata-tsang (February 25—March 2).

and bitter cold. Above Bakcham the road ascends still on the river's left flank. A village is passed in a mile, which may or may not be the "Gob-sorg" of the maps. One man of the valley called it Go-tang, which seems to be a truer rendering of the name. Here thick native cloth is woven at a loom, which is so far interesting in that it probably represents an antediluvian make still constantly and adequately used by the old ladies of the valley.

The women of Chumbi think a good deal of themselves, though to the eye of the stranger there seems very little distinction between the stunted and dirty little people of one part of Tibet and those of another. The head-dress used by them is the usual turquoise-studded aureole of the province of Tsang. The outer and possibly only garment* is of the same very thick crimson dun cloth, tied round the waist with a string and fastened at the throat with a plain yoke-like hasp of silver. This dress is generally patched until it is difficult to say with certainty which part of it is the original garment, and it is of course open to more objections than the presence of inanimate dirt alone presents. The shoes worn reach up to the knee, and are made of the same dark red cloth, variegated over the instep by a streak of scarlet extending down to the toes. Here the plain tanned yak hide encases it. These shoes are not uncomfortable, though the entire absence of any heel makes it necessary that a little practice in them should precede a long or a difficult tramp, otherwise the Achilles tendon is apt to make a violent protest. In face, the men and women are

* These ladies seem to use their outer dress as their *dessous* when torn and worn beyond decent use. A girl at Bolka had apparently two such under-garments.

strangely alike. Neither here nor elsewhere in Tibet do the men grow moustaches or beards; the utmost that one ever sees is a thin fringe of scanty hair marking the lips, or pointing the chin of a high official. It cannot be claimed that Tibetan ladies look beautiful. It is of course difficult to say what the effect would be if some of them were thoroughly washed. As it is, they exist from the cradle, or what corresponds to it, to the stone slab on which their dead bodies are hacked to pieces, without a bath or even a partial cleansing of any kind. One could imagine that they were of a tint almost as dark as a Gurkha, but this is by no means the case. In spite of the dirt, wherever the bodies are protected by clothes the skin remains of an ivory whiteness, which is indistinguishable from that of the so-called white races. At times also accident, perhaps in the shape of rain, has the effect of removing an outer film of dirtiness, and then it is quite clear that Tibetan girls, until they are two or three and twenty, have a complexion. Of course the habit of the race, of besmearing the forehead, cheeks, and nose with dark crimson kutch, which blackens as it dries, militates against any display of beauty. The origin of this strange custom is, like most facts and theories about Tibet, the subject of hot dispute. Some contend that it originally marked the married women only: some will have it, and there seems some evidence in their favour, that this disfigurement was intentionally introduced in order to save the ladies of Tibet from the sin of vanity, and incidentally, also, to reduce the chances of young men's infatuation. The third and more prosaic explanation is that it is done to mitigate the

Chumbi Valley. A view taken from the mountain side near Kata-tsang. The mule lines of Chumbi below on left bank ; Eusaka in middle distance on right bank. The Maharajah's palace in far distance.

glare of the sun from rock and snow.* This would be a more convincing reason, if the kutch was actually worked into the hollow of the eye, and on the eye-lid; but these are left unstained. Two other reasons, also of a flatly contradictory nature, have been suggested to explain this custom of Tibetan women, but there does not seem any necessity to accept either view. One thing must in common fairness be said, and that is, that nowhere in the world will you find such exquisite teeth in men, women and children alike as in Tibet, though it is beyond dispute certain that no tooth brush, or any form of cleansing them, has ever been practised, or indeed known, from one end of the country to the other.

Still going on from Chumbi, we turn a corner, just beyond where a big cavern opens in a rock, and are confronted at once with the wall and gate of Chorten-karpo, or the White Cairn. This is a Chinese post about a mile distant from the Tibetan village of Galinka. The wall itself is well and solidly built and has evidently been restored and pointed quite lately. Immediately outside it are some rock paintings. The portrait of the blue-faced goddess, Dolma jang, is strongly done.†

* Mr. Talbot Kelly recommends essentially the same thing for use against the glare of Egypt. The Sikkim coolies pull their hair over their eyes in a curtain for the same purpose.

† Jang in Tibetan means green. The word, however, is used indiscriminately for blue and green objects, and a curious question is suggested as to how far the Tibetans are colour blind. I made some scanty tests, but could arrive at no clear decision. From the use of their words denoting colour one would think that they with difficulty distinguished green from blue. Grass in Tibetan is always called blue, though if pressed a native will say that it is also green. Another curious misapplication is their statement that lapis lazuli is green, and the difficulty of identifying indranila is caused by the fact that it cannot be certainly discovered whether this mystical stone is blue or green. So far as other colours go, they seem to be able to distinguish reds and yellows with some clearness. But for the description of any modifying shade of the primary colours they fall back upon similitudes. One curious colour distinction that they make is found in the Tibetan names for the two great neighbouring Empires. China is the "Black Expanse" and India is the "White Expanse," and these names are old enough to have no reference to the presence or absence of Europeans. It has been conjectured, rather unconvincingly,

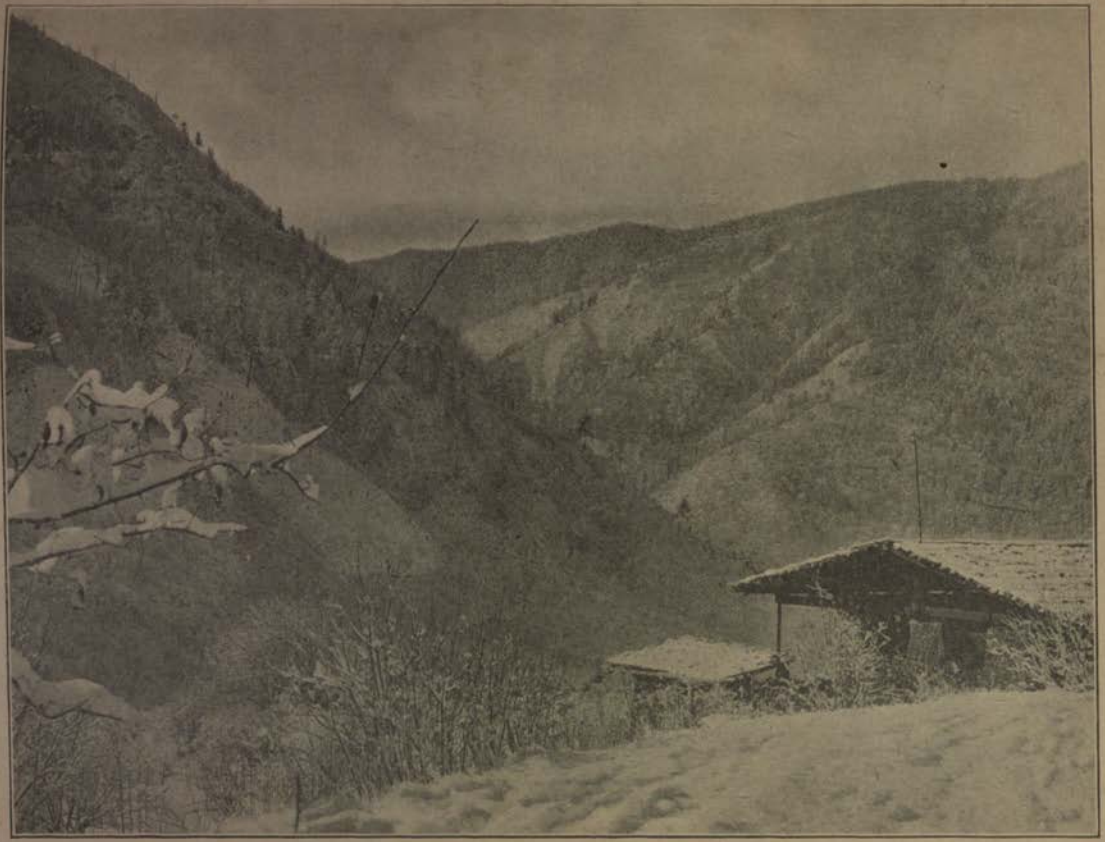
The road curves round to the right, under the village of Chorten-karpo, picking its way through the barberries and roses which grow between the boulders. Galinka can be identified by its tall scaffolding poles, that appear before the houses come into sight, and these, when first we passed through the place, we believed to be the poles of prayer flags. The mistake was a natural one, for a few torn shreds of gauze still rippled bravely in the breeze. But the real use of these tall posts was made clear in harvest time. Between each of them a little pent-house of straw protected from the rain the oddly shaped stack of winter fodder.

Prayer flags in Tibet are the commonest possible means of invocation. The "airy horses" printed upon long perpendicular strips of limp tarlatan, or rather butter muslin, about twelve inches wide, are nailed to the pole, from twenty to thirty feet in height. These fringes stand out in the wind, till they are frayed back to the very nails, or tear themselves loose in ragged streamers.*

Among the private convictions of Sir Isaac Newton was the singular belief that prayers went to Heaven by vibration. It was not, perhaps, one of the most demonstrable theories of that great man, and very little stress has ever been laid upon this curious idea, though I believe it underlies the almost universal use of incense as a symbol of prayer. But your pious Tibetan would have understood Sir Isaac in a moment; to him, movement is prayer, and no inert petition

that the distinction is due to the fact that the snow-topped mountain barriers of Tibet lie chiefly to the south.

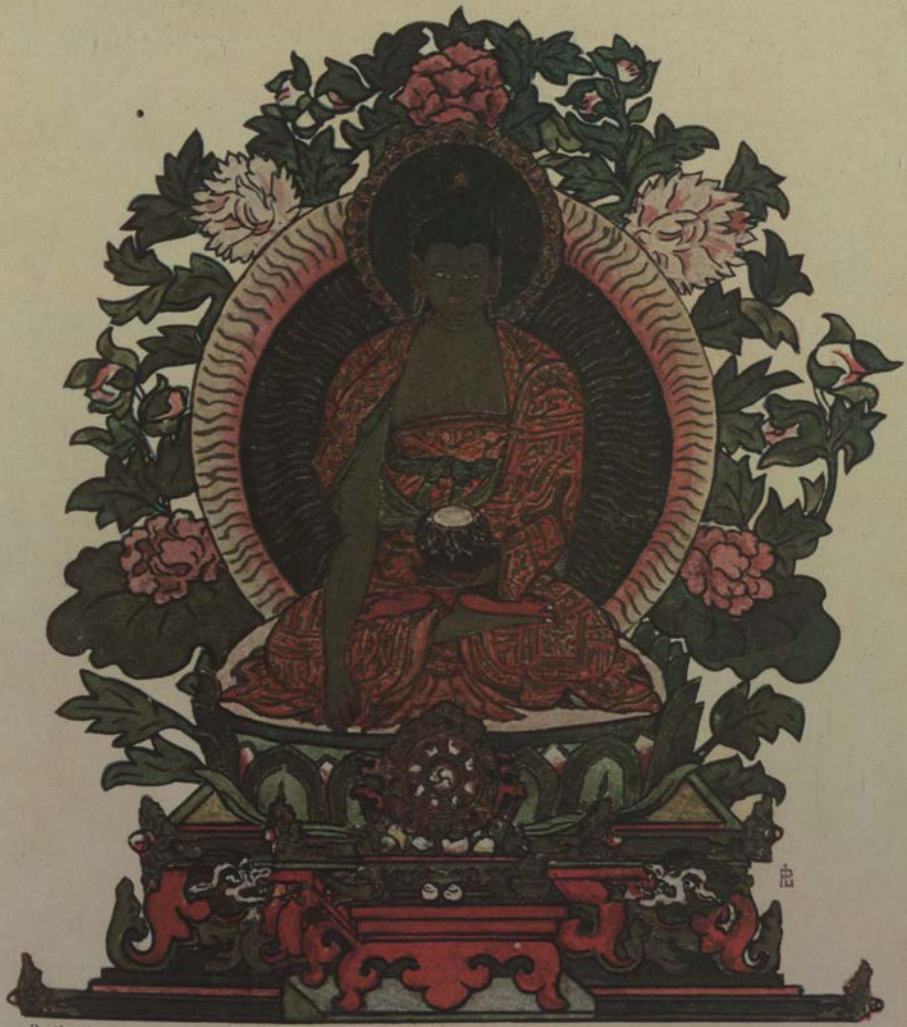
* In Lhasa itself a peculiarity is noticeable. The prayer flags there are tightly bound into the pole.



Chumbi in mid-winter.

The Tibetan Buddha

I MADE THIS DRAWING FROM THE WALL OF THE MESS-ROOM OF THE MISSION AT CHANG-LO. I DO NOT THINK I SAW ANOTHER WHICH WAS AS CAREFULLY DRAWN AND FINISHED AS THIS.



By the Author.

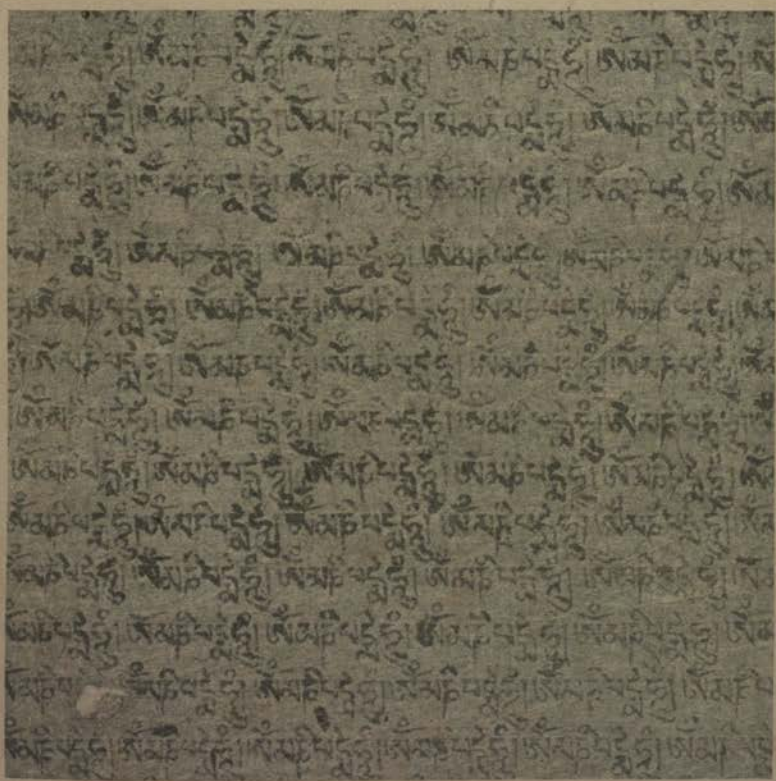
THE TIBETAN BUDDHA—FROM CHANG-LO.

finds its way to the ear of the gods. The turning of a prayer-wheel, whether in the hand, or by the agency of water, wind or fire, is the best illustration of this. The peregrinations round the Ling-kor or the Jo-kang at Lhasa are other examples of an acted prayer. Attention is not necessary; merit is acquired, whether the mind be fixed or not, and Claudius' truism, "Words without thoughts, never to Heaven go," would be scouted as foolishness by the piety of this land. Nor would the Lamas be inclined to agree with the counsel which deprecates repetition, for some of the larger prayer-wheels contain the sacred mantra, "Om mani padme hum," repeated to an extent that almost defies calculation. Very thin sheets of paper made from the *Daphne Cannabina*, as thin as Oxford India paper, are printed with symbols of this invocation as closely as the space permits. Many hundreds of sheets of this paper are compressed into every inch within the great revolving tub. The contents remain in a tight hard block, even if the outer covering is broken. A prayer-wheel eight feet in height may contain this same mantra about a hundred million times. Every revolution of a wheel like this adds considerably, therefore, to the credit side of the Tibetan's account in Heaven. So easy is it to add a thousand billion or so of these ejaculations to one's account in a five minutes' visit to the nearest gompa, that the plain mind of the occidental wonders why, if all this is really necessary, the Tibetan does not accumulate his merit in this easy fashion, instead of wandering all day long, uneconomically twisting in his hand the comparatively inefficacious hand wheel, or moving the still less expeditious lips. But here we soon

learn to leave behind us all the logic of the west. A thing is so in Tibet because it has always been so; research is not encouraged; progress is a form of heresy.

Galinka lies at the foot of the great dam which once fell across the waters of the Ammo chu and made a lake where now the plain of Lingma-tang stretches itself. This is a curious feature of the valley. One climbs 200 feet up from Galinka by the side of the sprawling torrent and at last reaches a piece of turf about a mile and a half long, a quarter of a mile wide, and as flat as Lord's. In the rainless months the turf grows here short and thick, and provides the best grazing of all the valley. It would be easy to make some arrangement for the draining of the plain in the rains, but, as it is, from the end of July onwards, Lingma-tang is a mere swamp, overgrown indeed with luxuriant vegetation and bright flowers, but, from a more practical point of view, a useless nuisance. Through this plain, in the curves of a tortured worm, the Ammo chu winds and re-winds itself. When the expedition first crossed the plain the rocky sides of the containing hills were bare of all but the seemingly dead trunks of birch, and the hardly more life-like blackish-green of the pines. A scanty and thorny brush filled in the interstices among the boulders just where the steep hills stood knee-deep in the plain, but that was all. The " vleis " of South Africa, which have been formed in a similar manner, will offer the best suggestion of the exactly perfect surface—then covered with brown, burnt grass, cropped short by sheep, and, as we once discovered, by shao also. At the southern end of the valley the forest comes down close to the plain, and one leaves behind the treeless level to be

engaged at once among the junipers and pines of the last stage of vegetation which at this great altitude the valley of the Ammo chu can show. The thorny shrubs cease as if by magic when the road has reached

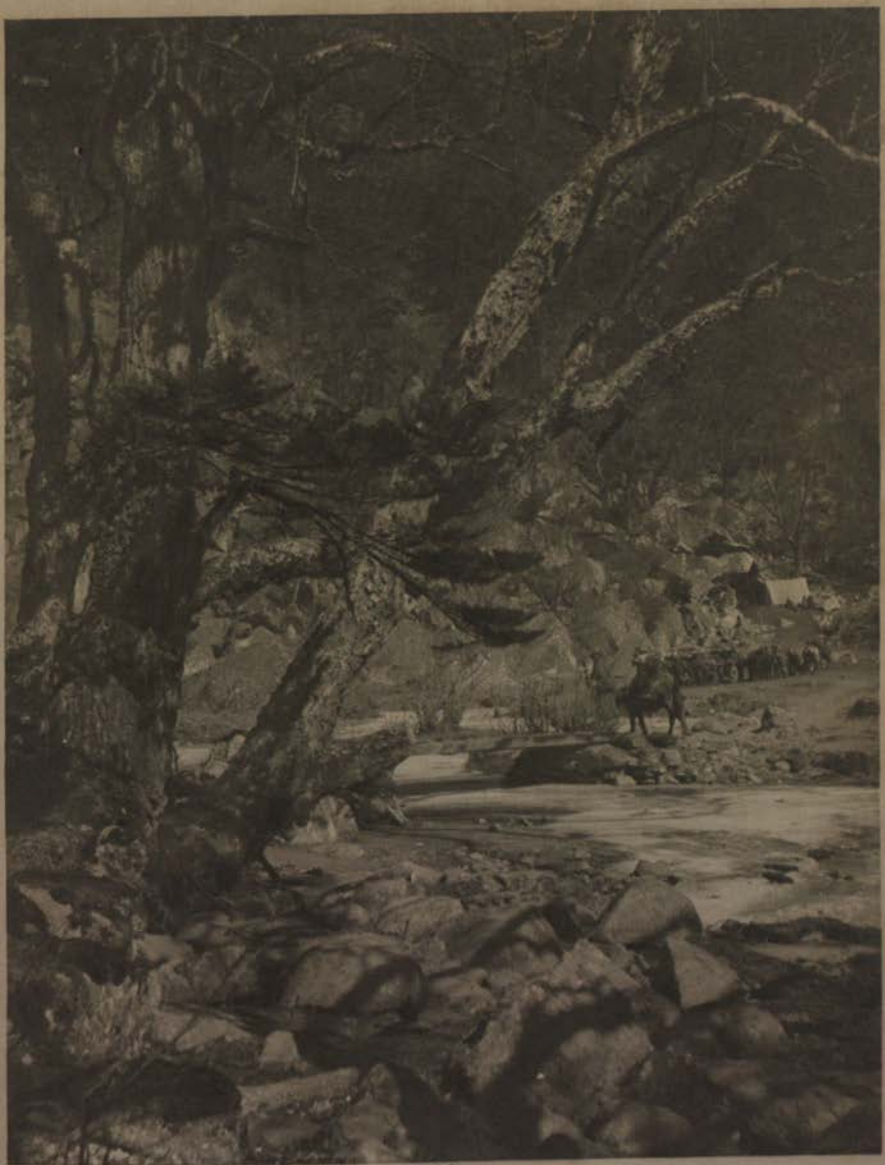


A printed piece of tissue-paper (made from the bark of the *Daphne Cannabina*) containing "Om mani padme hum," repeated about eighty times. This was taken from a large eight-foot prayer wheel, which probably contained the mantra upwards of a hundred million times.

the upper part of the rocky slope which has to be scaled before the road begins again an even ascent by the side of the stream. The silver firs come down thickly to the very edge of the water, and under their shade the track runs between moss-covered rocks some twenty

feet above the water, which here falls in a torrent from boulder to boulder, pausing only when delayed by the frost, which hangs great combs of ice from every gray dead fir athwart the stream. Junipers and a few twenty-foot rhododendron trees take advantage of the shelter of a turn in the range of hills just where the stone breast-work of Tong-shong crosses the road. The heavy, resinous smell of the pines harmonises well with the carpet of dark-green moss which sprawls at will over the seamed rocks of Indian red and sienna. The mountains, 2,000 feet over our heads, barely allow the road to squeeze between their gigantic Symplegades. Five miles beyond the end of Lingma-tang the road crosses the torrent twice and one comes out over a stony patch and a carpet of brown pine needles into a little clearing, where a heavy fall of grayish-black granite warns the traveller of the strange characteristics of the road for the next two or three miles.

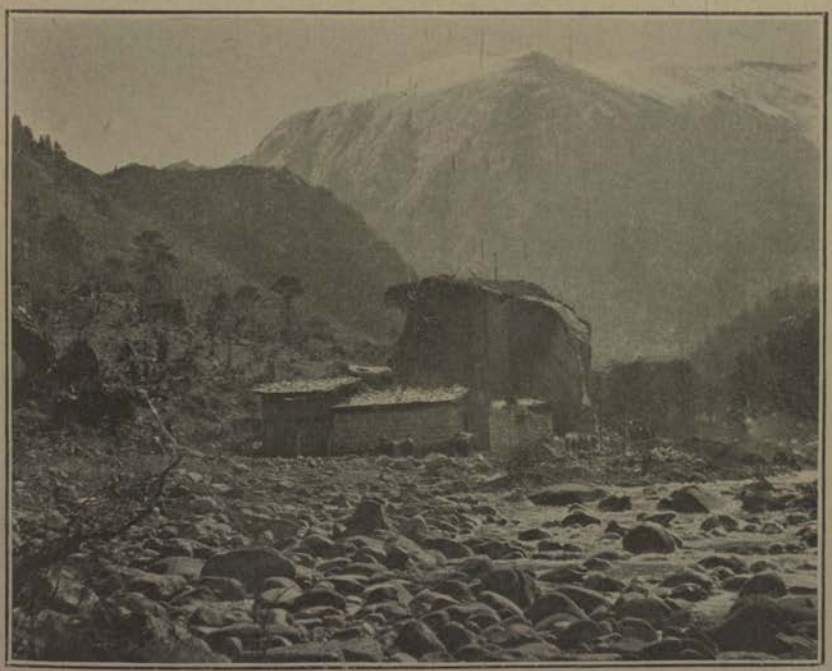
Some years ago—ninety or a hundred, perhaps, if one may judge by the size of the largest of the trees growing among the *débris*—a Himalayan convulsion shattered vertically the eastern side of the hills which hem in the tumbling river on the west. They now stand stark, austere, and perpendicular a thousand feet above the roadway and the stream. No trees crown their summits, not a bush can find root-hold on their granite faces. But at their feet a long, continuous buttress of granite, torn rawly from its matrix by the shock, forms a ramp 200 feet in height below the crannies and clefts of the gigantic curtain overhead. This ramp is composed of boulders varying in size from mere splinters of granite, which have been used wherewith to metal the bridle path, to one great giant at Ta-karpo or "White Rock." This is



GAUTSO IN THE CHUMBI VALLEY.

one of the most prominent features of the Chumbi Valley. There are in it over 70,000 cubic feet of stone above the level of the *débris* over which the road goes, and on which the Chinese post has been built.*

The name of this rock must have been given years ago. When this granite is newly exposed to the air

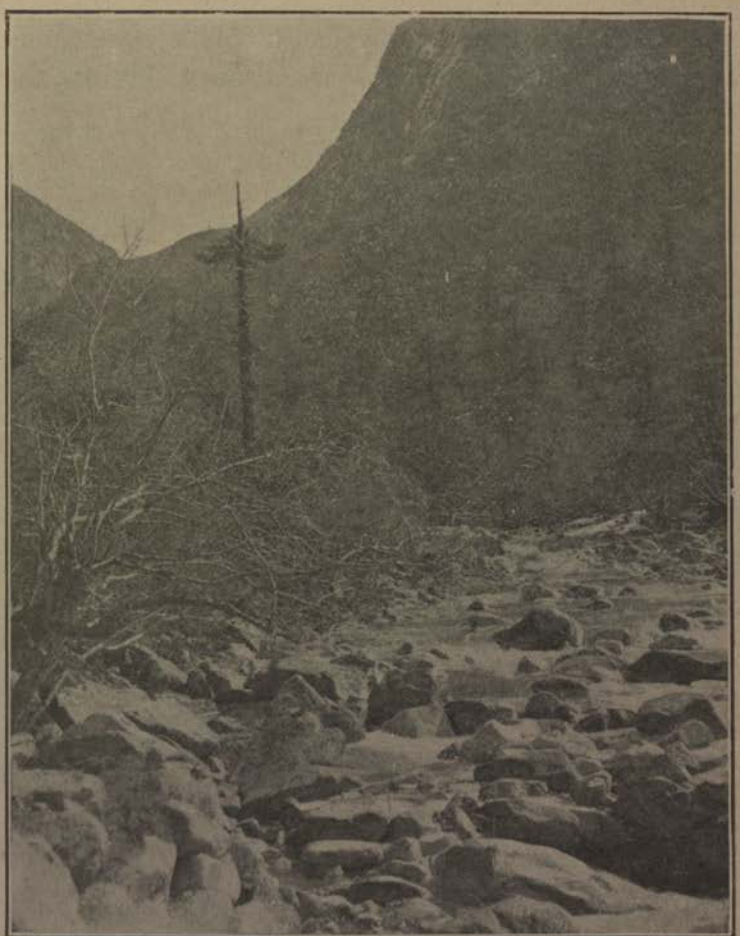


Ta-karpo. The great "White Rock" of the Chumbi Valley.

it is of a vivid, crystalline whiteness. Such granite is not, perhaps, to be found elsewhere in the world. For not only is it incomparable in colour, but its hardness almost defies dynamite; the explosion of the charge

* The use by the Tibetans of the stored warmth of the sun in these vast blocks of stone is quite intentional. The vegetation immediately surrounding this great rock showed the stimulating power of the accumulated heat, slowly surrendered all the frosty night by the fallen monster. To this may also be due the constant use by wayfarers of the natural shelters formed by hollows under projecting rocks.

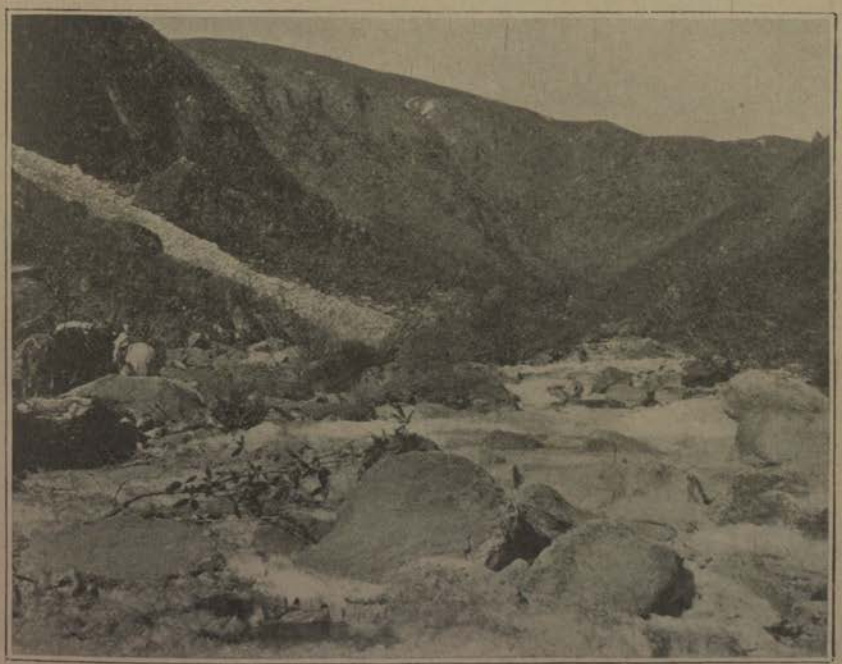
does not cleave the boulders, it merely breaks out great craters from the stone. The stone darkens rapidly on exposure to the air, and the sparkling purity is soon



The upper waters of the Ammo chu.

hidden under a film of dull grayish-black. Beside this sloping terrace, crowned only with birch and juniper, the river rushed between frozen banks. Sometimes there was only a narrow channel left in the middle,

and one could see the three-foot baulks of ice which hedged the water in, and listen to the quiet "seethe" with which, now and again, a thin detached layer of ice begotten of last night and astray upon the current mounted and came to rest upon the thickening, greenish mass below. It was just like the prickling crackle



The frozen Ammo chu in February. The extreme limit of trees is almost reached here.

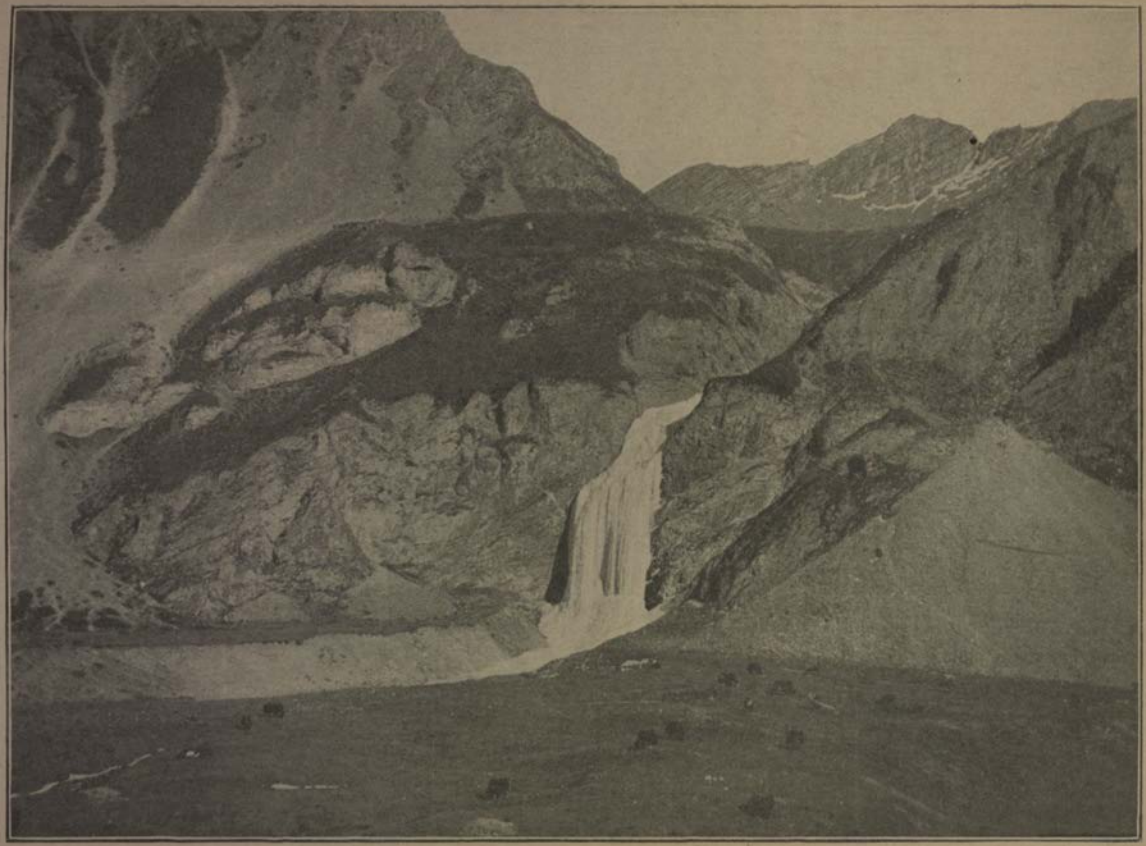
of a glazier's diamond. Sometimes the ice extended from shore to shore, broken here and there by some whirlpool which had defied the cold, or some spirt of water where the stream flowed too viciously over a rounded stone to be entirely caught by the closing-in grip of the frost. It was a wild scene, and very soon the limit of vegetation, which is here about 13,300

feet, was apparent a little way up the hill-sides. Birches are the last to go.

Another sharp climb brings one to the last phase of the Chumbi valley. This, indeed, is different from all the scenes through which we have passed. A promontory, now being avoided by the work of pioneers,

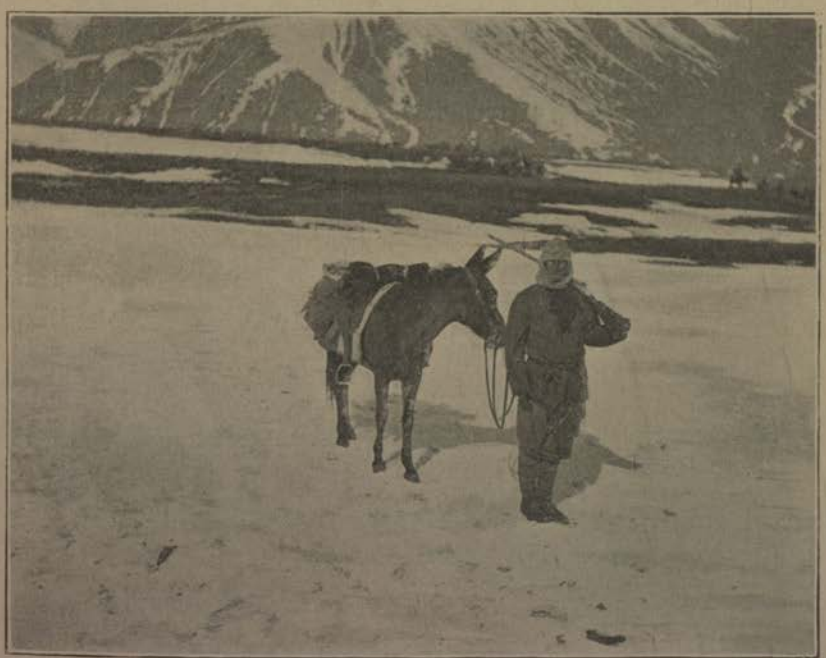
The Tibetan track and the English road. A study in contrasts near the "White Rock" in Chumbi Valley. The old track ascends to the left.

gave us a view of the bare plain of Dota ahead. To the east a frozen waterfall, nearly a hundred feet in height, was the rallying point of our attention. It was a gigantic, irregular pillar of ribbed ice, through which the evening sun played with the colours of a Pacific shallow. But this was the last example of abruptness. From that point till the Tang la rises gently beneath the



The frozen waterfall at Dota in the Chumbi Valley. The fall is about ninety feet high. The animals feeding on the plain below are yaks.

ice-bound crags of Chumolhari, on all sides the hills sweep down gently to the stream or valley, bellying, brown, grassy slopes—for all the world like Sussex downs tilted together at an angle. There was not on all that waste of formless and almost naked rock a stick of vegetation a foot high. Only little dead bents

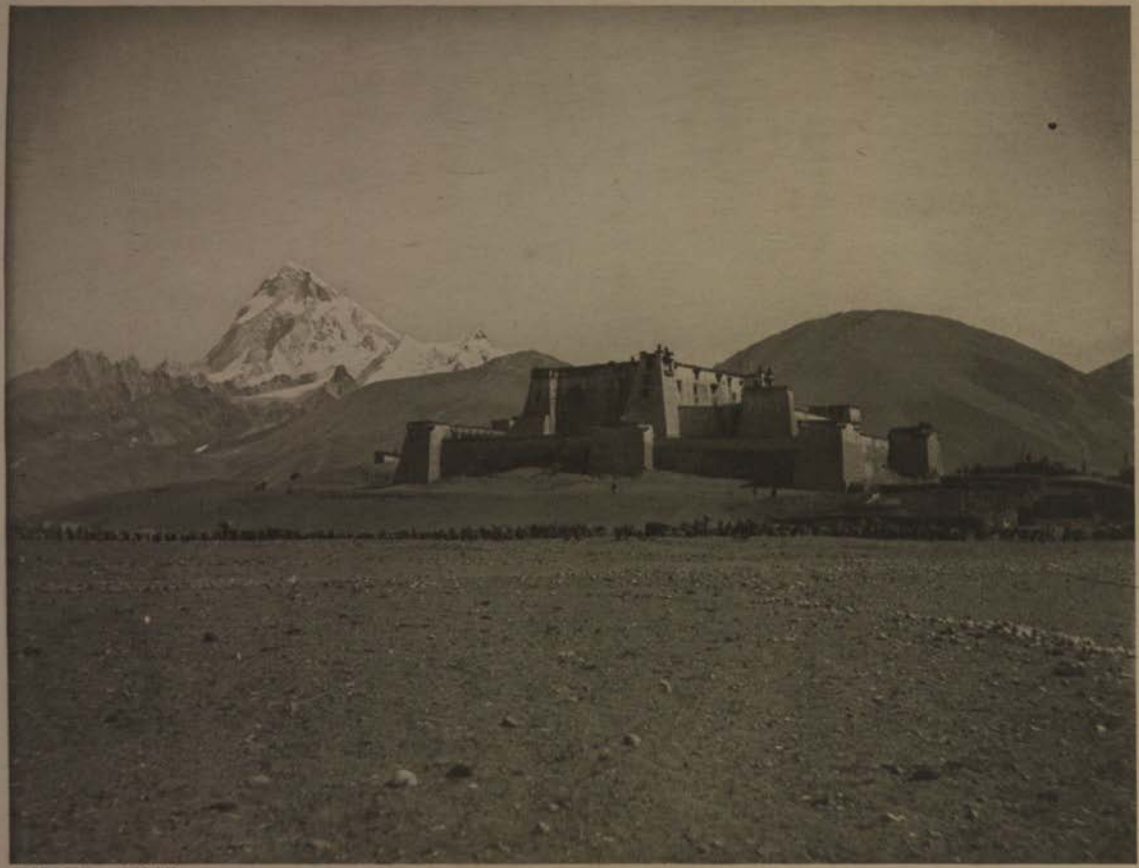


"Susan" and Tsering on Phari plain.

of aconite prick up still brown and innocent. Nothing else breaks the monotony of the finger-long blades of coarse low-lying grass. I do not suppose that in all the world you could find a contrast so great as that which meets the eye at Dota during your stage from Gautso to the plain below the pass. From Dota to the Tang la, and indeed on northwards for three thousand miles, except for the fertile alluvial flats

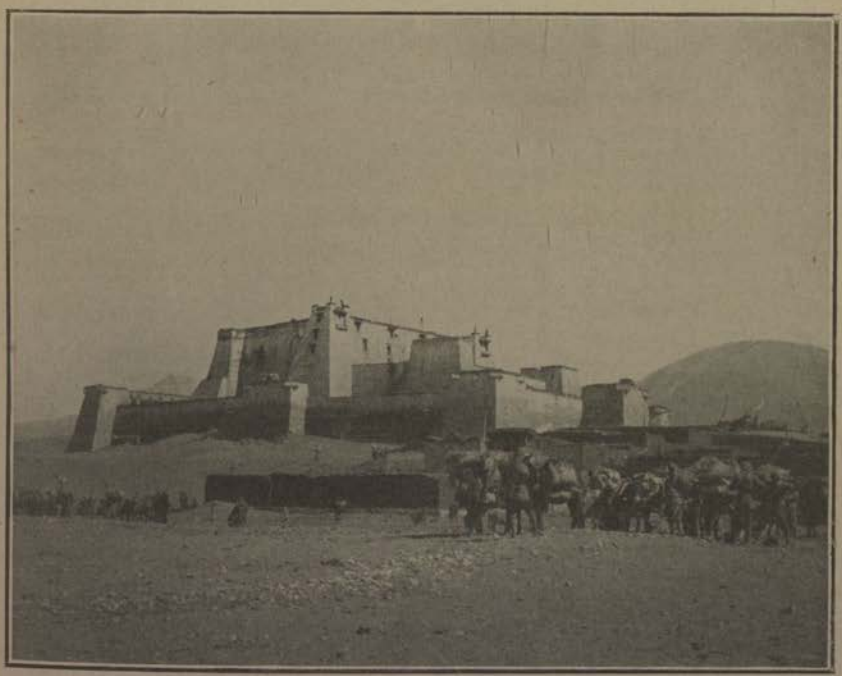
which hem in the rivers of southern Tibet, this scenery remains monotonous, waterless, heart-breaking. One has said good-bye to the Himalayan landscape with a suddenness that can hardly be conceived, and from this point onwards the track winds round the easy curves of hills or picks its way along the flat, stubbly plains till, as one turns the last corner beyond Kamparab, Phari Jong comes out from behind the last spur on the left and dominates the distance, a square, grayish block of keep and bastion and parapet commanding the converging highways of three States, and itself humiliated by the overhanging 10,000 feet of Chumolhari's rock and ice.

The town of Phari deserves more than a passing notice. The name—which in Tibetan is spelled "Phag-ri," or the "pig-hill"—has been explained in many ways. The small mound on which it is built may, or may not, have been shaped like a pig, as the inhabitants say. The name may, or may not, have some reference to the pig goddess who is reincarnated by the shores of the Lake of Palti as the Dorje Phagmo—the Abbess of Samding. There is a third explanation, which the lamas of the monastery of Chat-sa, four miles away to the north, say is self-evident, but of that later. The Jong itself is clearly of Chinese-plus-European construction. Its date, as ascertained by papers at Lhasa, was said by the two Jong-pens, or fort commandants, to be about 1500 A.D.; it is, indeed, impossible to assign it to a date later than 1600, and the assertion of the custodians may well be true. A well-constructed stone parapet eighteen feet high, with corner bastions, surmounts a low hill about twenty feet in height. Above this, occupying the centre of the hill,



PHARI JONG.

stands the keep, about fifty feet in height and a hundred and twenty wide, of several storeys, and irregularly bastioned, or rather buttressed. The fort lies square to the points of the compass, each side of the parapet being about 110 yards in length. The peculiar features in its construction conclusively prove that the place



Phari Jong. The hole in the wall afterwards increased in size.

was built in unreasoning imitation of some European model, for the little machicolated galleries which bestraddle the corners of the outer bastions are entirely useless. Nothing could be dropped from them, as they dominate precisely the points at which no sane commander would deliver an attack. Moreover, they are of the flimsiest construction, and, at present at any rate,

do not even possess floors. Inside, the Jong is dark, badly constructed, and, to some extent, positively dangerous, as the seeming solid walls are actually thin skins of granite masonry filled with rubble. In many places one skin has fallen and the interior beams are supported wholly upon the other. Quite recently a large part of the northern wall has completely fallen. A certain amount of armour, both of iron and bamboo, was found in the Jong, but every weapon of modern construction had been carefully removed to the north or buried.

It is, however, the town of Phari which will remain longest in the memory of those who have seen it but once. The headquarters mess of the escort to the Mission included several men whose experience of the outlying places of the world it would be difficult to equal round another table. But by common consent Phari was the filthiest town on earth. This is a charge not unfrequently made against other towns, so it may be worth while to justify the right of Phari to that bad eminence. First, let it be said in fairness that there are more than a few reasons why the inhabitants of this town are of necessity dwellers in dirt. To begin with, Phari, at a height of 15,000 feet, is the highest town worthy of the name in the world. The cold is consequently fearful, a nightly temperature ranging in February rather downwards than upwards from −3° F., being often joined with a merciless grit-laden cold wind from the north. Cold is admittedly an excuse for dirt, but it is not cold only that palliates the filth of Phari. At this altitude the least exertion brings on breathlessness and apathy. To put on a pair of boots and gaiters is often a serious exertion for the

new-comer, and it is not, perhaps, to be expected that the good people of Phari should go out of their way to secure by unwelcome activity a sanitation and

An old woman of Phari.

cleanliness which appeal to them as little as to other Tibetans. Indeed, any others of that uncleanly race would, under similar circumstances, attain an equal degree of dirt. The absence of trees, compelling the

wretched people here to use argol or dried yak-dung as their only fuel, is another contributory cause. The heavy, greasy blue fumes of these fires coat the interior of the squat houses with a layer of soot which it would be useless labour to remove. Unfrozen water is almost non-existent, except during the summer, and, so far at least as the women are concerned, the dirt which seams their faces is not perhaps unwelcome, for, as we have seen, custom compels the disfigurement with kutch (or raddle resembling dried blood) of the brows and cheeks of women in Tibet.

Having thus pleaded the cause, I have now to explain the results of this want of cleanliness upon the town of Phari. The collection of sod-built hovels, one or, at most, two storeys in height, cowers under the southern wall of the Jong for protection against the wind from the bitterest quarter. The houses prop each other up. Rotten and misplaced beams project at intervals through the black layers of peat, and a few small windows lined with crazy black match-boarding sometimes distinguish an upper from a lower floor. The door stands open; it is but three black planks, a couple of traverses, and a padlock. Inside, the black glue of argol smoke coats everything. A brass cooking-pot or an iron hammer, cleaned of necessity by use, catches the eyes as the only thing in the room of which one sees the real colour. A blue haze fills the room with acrid and penetrating virulence. In the room beyond, the meal is being cooked, and a dark object stands aside as one enters. It is a woman, barely visible in the dark. Everything in the place is coated and grimed with filth. At last one distinguishes in a rude cradle and a blanket, both as black as everything

else, an ivory-faced baby. How the children survive is a mystery. It is the same in every house. Nothing has been cleaned since it was made, and the square hole in the flat roof, which serves at once to admit light and air, and to emit smoke, looks down upon practically the same interior in five hundred hovels.

Street scene in Phari. Notice head-dress of woman and old hag peeping from behind "gyan-tsen" (*not* chimney) on roof.

But it is in the streets that the dirt strikes one most. Let it be said at once that in the best quarter of the town, that in which the houses are two-storeyed, the heaped-up filth—dejecta and rejecta alike—rises to the first-floor windows, and a hole in the mess has to be kept open for access to the door. It must be seen to be believed. In the middle of the street, between

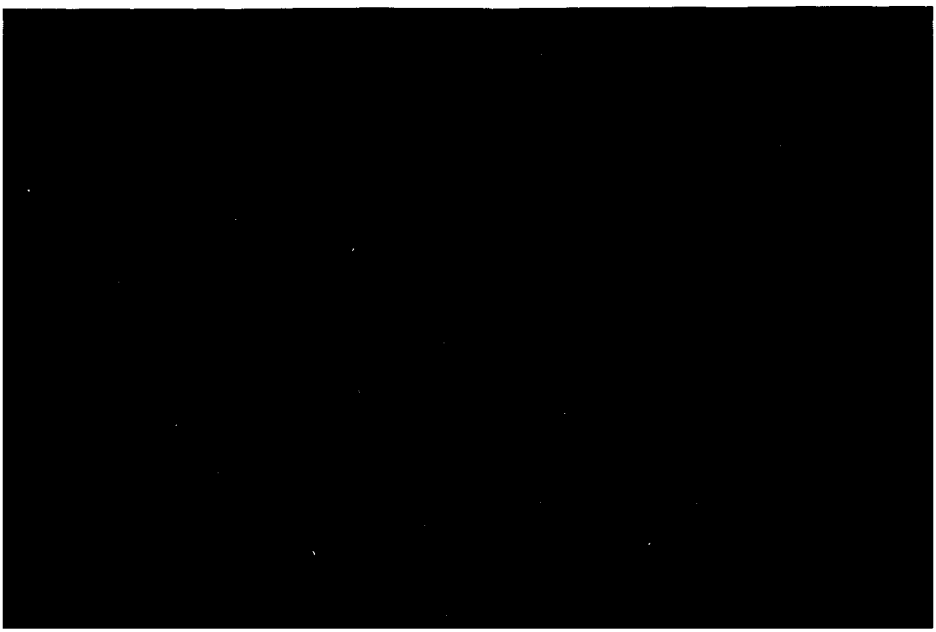
the two banks of filth and offal, runs a stinking channel, which thaws daily. In it horns and bones and skulls of every beast eaten or not eaten by the Tibetans—there are few of the latter—lie till the dogs and ravens have picked them clean enough to be used in the mortared walls and thresholds. The stench is fearful. Half-decayed corpses of dogs lie cuddled up with their mangy but surviving brothers and sisters, who do not resent the scavenging ravens. Here and there a stagnant pool of filth has partially defied the warmth, and carrion, verminous rags, and fur-wrapped bones are set round it in broken yellowish ice. In the middle the brown patch is iridescent. A curdled and foul torrent flows in the day-time through the market-place, and half-bred yaks shove the sore-eyed and mouth-ulcered children aside to drink it. The men and women, clothes and faces alike, are as black as the peat walls that form a background to every scene. They have never washed themselves. They never intend to wash themselves. Ingrained dirt to an extent that it is impossible to describe reduces what would otherwise be a clear, sallow-skinned, but good complexioned race to a collection of foul and grotesque negroes.

"Dirt, dirt, grease, smoke." Thomas Manning's concise description of Phari as he knew it on the 21st of October, 1811, holds to this day, and the cleaning up which went on inside the walls of the great buttressed fort after our arrival provoked no imitation in the foul streets and grimed turf-built hovels at its foot.

And the disgust of all this is heightened by an ever-present contrast, for, at the end of every street, hanging in mid-air above this nest of mephitic filth, the cold and almost saint-like purity of the everlasting snows of

On the Glacis of Phari jong.

I HAVE INCLUDED THIS PICTURE SIMPLY BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME TO BE A BEAUTIFUL THING IN ITSELF. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS NOT UNCHARACTERISTIC OF THE BARE, GRITTY SOIL AND DUST-LADEN WIND OF THIS EXPOSED PLAIN. *From amber to mastic brown.*



ON THE GLACIS OF PHARI FORT.

Chumolhari—a huge wedge of argent a mile high—puts to perpetual shame the dirt of Phari.

* * * * * *

The Jong-pens, or twin commandants of the fortress,

An inhabitant of the valley.

had trimmed their sails with some dexterity under the stress of this breeze of foreign influence. They had served us not unfaithfully, a fact which they had doubt-

less kept from the knowledge of those far Lhasan authorities with whom their correspondence was neither confessed nor unknown to us. For their reception of the English into the fort—an occupation which every succeeding week more fully justified—the two Jong-pens were ceremonially degraded at Peking. This,

The two Jong-pens of Phari.

however, is the East. At the request of the very Power whose reception had caused their disgrace, they were at once, with equal formality, reinstated in their dignities of the crystal button and the backward-slanting peacock feather—avowedly for services rendered to the English. What wonder if these two worthy men were a little bewildered as to their duty. Nor

was it clear to them on which side their bread would ultimately prove to be buttered. With gratitude they accepted the offer of a monthly salary of 50 rupees apiece during our occupation of Phari; with foresight they declined to accept any money from us until after the expedition was over. Asked whether they believed that we should be unsuccessful, they smiling put the question by. But, they said, there were many and powerful forts lying between us and Gyantse, and though the Pilings—they ought not to have used the word to us—were beyond question a mighty race, who could foresee the future? They accepted the invidious position with a good grace, and, on the whole, after a preliminary attempt to smuggle cattle over the near Bhutanese frontier, they acted with apparent integrity.

Such was the road along which the toilsome preparations for the advance crept slowly to the storehouses of Chumbi and Phari from the plains of India. Through all the tedious months necessitated by this provision for the future, Brigadier-General Macdonald, with the exception of one or two expeditions up and down along the line of communication, remained at Chumbi. Meanwhile, Colonel Younghusband, with the members of the Mission, remained pent up in the wretched little houses which cower beneath the hills of Tuna from the eternal blast which drives the heavy grit under foot along the open frozen wastes of this Himalayan plateau, hundreds of feet higher than the summit of Mont Blanc.

CHAPTER V.

THE DISASTER AT GURU.

ALL preparations were ready by the last week in March, and on the 26th, Brigadier-General Macdonald started from Chumbi. His first march brought him to the small wooded plain of Gautso, where a strong little camp had been maintained for some time. It was the last halt below the upper limit of trees, and for the last time we enjoyed here an unlimited supply of fuel. The next day the force pushed on to Phari, where a day's halt was made to compose the column finally for the advance. On the following day a short march was made to a camping place on the bare plains one mile short of the Tang la. It was a bitterly cold spot, utterly unprotected in any way, and the two slight valleys which meet here acted as funnels for the wind that blows everlastingly across these frozen plains. On the 29th of March,* the camp was struck early. Chumolhari rose overhead, veiling its vast icy slopes with thin, half-frozen cloud. From behind it the sun rose coldly, forming, by some curious series of accidents, the most beautiful and complete white rainbow that any of us had ever seen. There is something about a white rainbow which is not entirely different from the plumage of a white peacock. If you look closely you will find that the structure of the missing bands of colour

* Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita.

Convoy of Yaks passing the Tang la.

THERE WAS A BITTER STORM OF ICE-LADEN WIND BLOWING WHILE THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN. TO THOSE WHO WERE NOT THERE IT WILL SUGGEST AT LEAST SOMETHING OF THE MISERY OF A BLIZZARD ON THIS TERRIBLE PASS. MEN AND BEASTS ARE ALIKE COATED WITH ICE. *Cold grey.*

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

CONVOY OF YAKS PASSING THE TANG LA IN A BLIZZARD.

remains almost unchanged, and in this perfect half-circle of the purest white one could almost imagine the ghostly lines of division between the customary tints. For twenty minutes it arched over the valley running up westwards towards Pahamri, and vanished slowly as the long line of the expedition moved out of camp.

It was a bitter morning ; the promise of the sun was betrayed, and, as we ascended the last furlongs of the southern slope, the cold came down upon us again with bitter intensity. Crossing the Tang la into Tibet proper was a terrible experience. The frozen mist, laced with stinging splinters of ice, was blown horizontally into our faces by the wind which never sleeps over this terrible Pass. Men and animals alike were stiff with an armour of ice, and beards and even eyelashes were powdered and hoary with the fine particles of frozen mist. It was difficult to see fifty yards away and the accompanying photogravure will give perhaps some idea of the hardships which no human activity can ever hope to remove from the highway leading on to Lhasa.

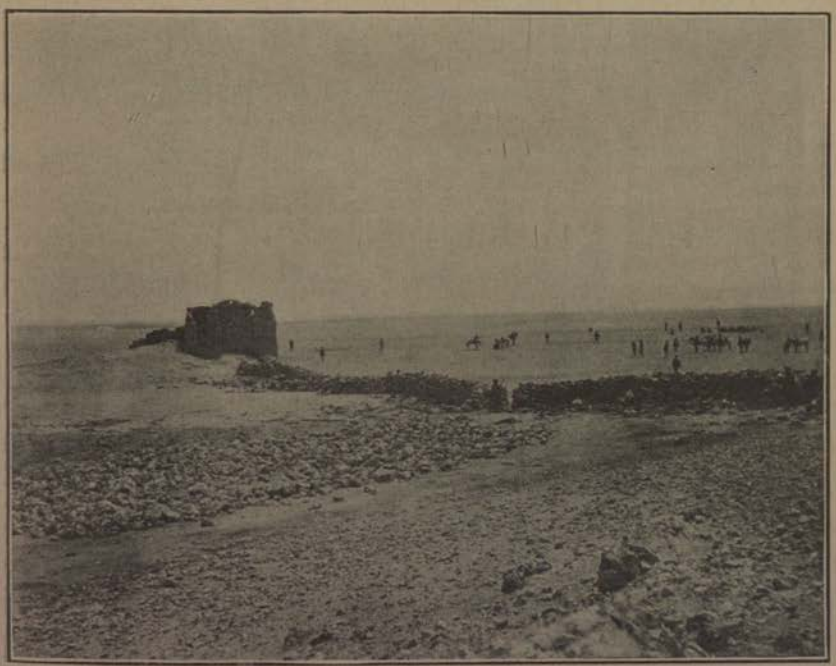
Slowly creeping on against the blizzard, the long line of animals and men moved into and out of the narrow radius of one's sight, demi-cloaked with ice. About eight o'clock the sun gathered enough power to melt the frost in the air, and an hour later, looking up from the mist which rose like steam from the plain, one could see the clear white top of Chumolhari sailing against the thin light clouds of the upper air. We had crossed the frontier. Half an hour later the plain was clear to the horizon, and we trudged on against the wind and over as forbidding a floor as exists on earth. It was grit and pebbles all the way. There was not the slightest hint of even

the dead brittle shrubs of wormwood that gave promise of greenery on the plain of Phari. Two streams, hard bound with ice, lay across our path, and Tuna was not to be seen till we were almost upon it. When it at last came in sight it seemed a strange place, indeed, for the residence of a British Commissioner for the

Tuna. Here the Mission spent three months on a treeless plain at a height of over 15,000 feet.

whole winter. Backed by arid sand-stone dunes 600 or 700 feet high, its only outlook is towards the snow-fields, peaks and glaciers of the dividing range between Bhutan and Tibet, culminating to the west in the gigantic mass of Chumolhari. There had been nothing to do all the winter. There was little game to shoot, and the only walk, unless one climbed the hills at the back of the post, was "there and back again" across

the accursed frozen waste. As we came near, the houses which the Mission had originally occupied appeared. They are squalid in the extreme, and one could well understand that Colonel Younghusband and his men had early preferred to brave the cold of the winter in their tents.



The Tibetan wall at the Hot Springs. The Tibetan name is Chu-mi shenga. But it was never known by that title, and I insert it here in deference to Capt. Ryder.

On our arrival we had luncheon with the Mission—these were the days before the stores began to run low—and a surprisingly good luncheon it was. We heard the latest news. The Tibetans had been watched for some days; they had built a wall across the road at a point between six and seven miles to the north, and there was no doubt that, besides the force (then

estimated at about a thousand men) who were manning this defence, large bodies of Tibetans were also busy on the other side of the Bam tso. From the old narratives of the eighteenth century, one had expected to find this lake within sight of Tuna, and it is quite clear that at no very remote period, Tuna itself was almost washed by its waters. But not a sign of them was now to be seen, though the short cut to Lhasa through the La-tse Karo la just visible across the plain, proved how recently the ground had at any rate been a swamp by the wide curve which it took before it started north-east, from the posting station and village of Hram.*

A typical day followed. From the earliest dawn till after sunset, a piercing wind swept the camp from end to end with a hurricane of tingling grit, and the discomfort of the men was increased by the device which Brigadier-General Macdonald adopted to deceive any Tibetan scouts who might be lurking among the hills which hemmed in the plain to the west. All tents were struck and the men received strict orders to conceal themselves. Capt. Ottley, after a reconnaissance with his mounted infantry, reported that the Tibetans had temporarily retired from their wall, and from the string of sangars which led upwards from its western end over the spurs of the neighbouring hills. But as they had returned in full force by the morning of the 31st, it is more probable that they were driven away, not in any belief that the Mission had retreated, but simply because even the Tibetans found the discomfort of the day unbearable.

At twenty minutes past eight on the 31st the column

* This village is supposed to give an alternative name to this sheet of water. It appears as the Hram tso on many maps, but without any real justification.

moved out. About a mile and a quarter of the road ran eastwards immediately under the high spur to which I have referred. Then, turning sharply to the north, it makes its way five miles to the little promontory and ruined house between which the road runs. Here, as we could see two miles away, the Tibetans had built their defences. On the plain itself, the wall ran from the spur to the house, constructed in the shape of four redans with narrow openings between them. On the left hand the hills, grassless and stony, rose steadily until the saddle joined the two-thousand-foot ridge three miles away to the west. Here there were seven or eight sangars. But to our right a clear space of three thousand yards of level plain stretched between the end of their poor little defences and the nearest swamp bordering the far but just visible waters of the lake. The fatuity of the Tibetan scheme of defence would, one thinks, have been manifest to a child. No attempt whatever to block this space was made. The truth is that the whole project had been conceived in Lhasa. The authorities there were guided by an obsolete map, or possibly by a mistaken remembrance of the locality, and the general who came to conduct operations had no authority to select another field for his defence. The fact that the lake had retreated about two miles from its ancient shore was a matter of which the lamas in the capital were either ignorant or careless.

We trampèd steadily across the plain—a mere continuation of the Tuna plateau, frozen deep, and barely supporting the scanty growth of thistles that pricked up here and there through the patches of still lying snow. Everything under foot or in the distance was grey and colourless. You will understand more clearly the scene

of the coming incident if you will remember the bitter, frost-laden south wind blowing all day with increasing strength beneath a hard ash-grey sky.

Just when the Tibetan wall had become clearly visible in the distance, a messenger, riding forward in haste, announced the coming of the leading men of the defending force. The Lhéding Dépen himself was in the field, and he, accompanied by his brother general from Shigatse, the late Commandant of Phari, and Gesur Yeshe Wang-gyuk (the representative of the great Ga-den monastery), ambled quickly across the plain, and an informal conference was held between the military and political chiefs on either side. It was merely a repetition of the same old story. Coached from Lhasa, the delegates had no power, if, indeed, they had the wish or saw the necessity, to say anything but the old parrot-cry, "Go back to Ya-tung." As Colonel Younghusband himself reminded them, this obstinacy had served the Tibetans in good stead for fifteen years. Hitherto it had always succeeded; how then were they to realise that at last the British Government was in earnest? After twenty minutes of excited but fruitless discussion, carried on through the interpretation of Captain O'Connor—at such times the most immovably patient of men—the small durbar was broken up and the more important of the Tibetans cantered back to their defences in a cloud of dust. One or two only endeavoured, by violent gesticulation and shouting all together, to secure the retreat of the English commissioner. O'Connor, though he was being jostled and ridden off ten times a minute, retained his composure, explaining again and again that the advance must now continue, and that Colonel Younghusband could listen

The conference on the plain an hour before the disaster of Guru. Macdonald and Younghusband are seated in front with their backs turned. The Lhéding Dépen—the Commander-in-Chief at Lhasa—is leaning forward speaking to Capt. O'Connor. He is wearing the usual single Tibetan ear-ring. Beside him is seated the Shigatse Dépen.

to nothing before Gyantse was reached. At last they were made to understand, and shouting excitedly to each other they, too, scampered away on their stout little ponies. It was a curious incident—the impassive *non possumus* which Younghusband returned to the heated declamations of the two senior delegates; the

Tibetan attendants waiting during the conference on the plain.

gay yellow and green coats of the generals from Lhasa and Shigatse; the various head-dresses; the purple and blue of the robes; the strange forked guns embossed with turquoise and coral; the richly-worked sword hilts; the little grey and bay ponies, saddle-clothed with swastika-patterned stuffs and gay with filigree brass headbands and wide moulded iron stirrups

—all these things straight from the sacred and forbidden city possessed a new and intense interest for all of us.

There was no doubt about it; the Tibetans intended to defend their walls, and this created a most unpleasant predicament. Acting upon Colonel Younghusband's instructions, the General ordered that not a shot was to be fired until the enemy had begun. This, in other words, meant that our men were to forego every advantage which discipline and modern weapons conferred upon them. At the worst, it meant that they were obliged to march straight up to sangars, held by men equipped with firearms of unknown strength, and that, not only were they to suffer a possibly destructive volley before opening fire, but that they might even be compelled to carry on the combat at a range so short and from ground so coverless that the Tibetans would enjoy other advantages besides that of sheer numbers, which they already possessed. Still, the thing was done. It was such a policy as has probably had no parallel since the days of the Old Guard at Fontenoy, and it is more to the credit of Indian discipline than English readers may realise that not a man, Gurkha or Sikh, disobeyed the order all the day.

The scene was a strange one. Out towards the lake a thin extended line was pushed forward, far outflanking the wall and entirely commanding the line of the Tibetans' retreat. Meanwhile, the 23rd Pioneers and the 8th Gurkhas were slowly clearing the hills on the left, making each sangar disgorge its holders one after the other. It was done in silence, and almost with good-humour; but there was a hush of suspense among the two staffs out in the plain who were watching with straining eyes the slow progress of the

khaki dots on the hillsides two miles away. At any moment a shot might fire the powder magazine, and it was not till the last of the hundreds of grey-coated figures had slowly come down to the wall that the officers shut up their field-glasses and moved on to where the work of disarmament was just beginning. The sense of an insecurely leashed anger which might break out at any moment was suddenly replaced by an exaggerated sense of security and congratulation. The incident was regarded as practically over. The Commissioner and the General rode in together to the wall to watch the huddled group of Tibetans massed behind it, covering as much ground as a battalion in quarter column. On either side of them were our men. In front also the wall was lined with the 32nd Pioneers; the line of retreat alone lay open to them. Two hundred others had been taken prisoners up the hill-side and disarmed there. These remained passive and thankful spectators of what was to follow.

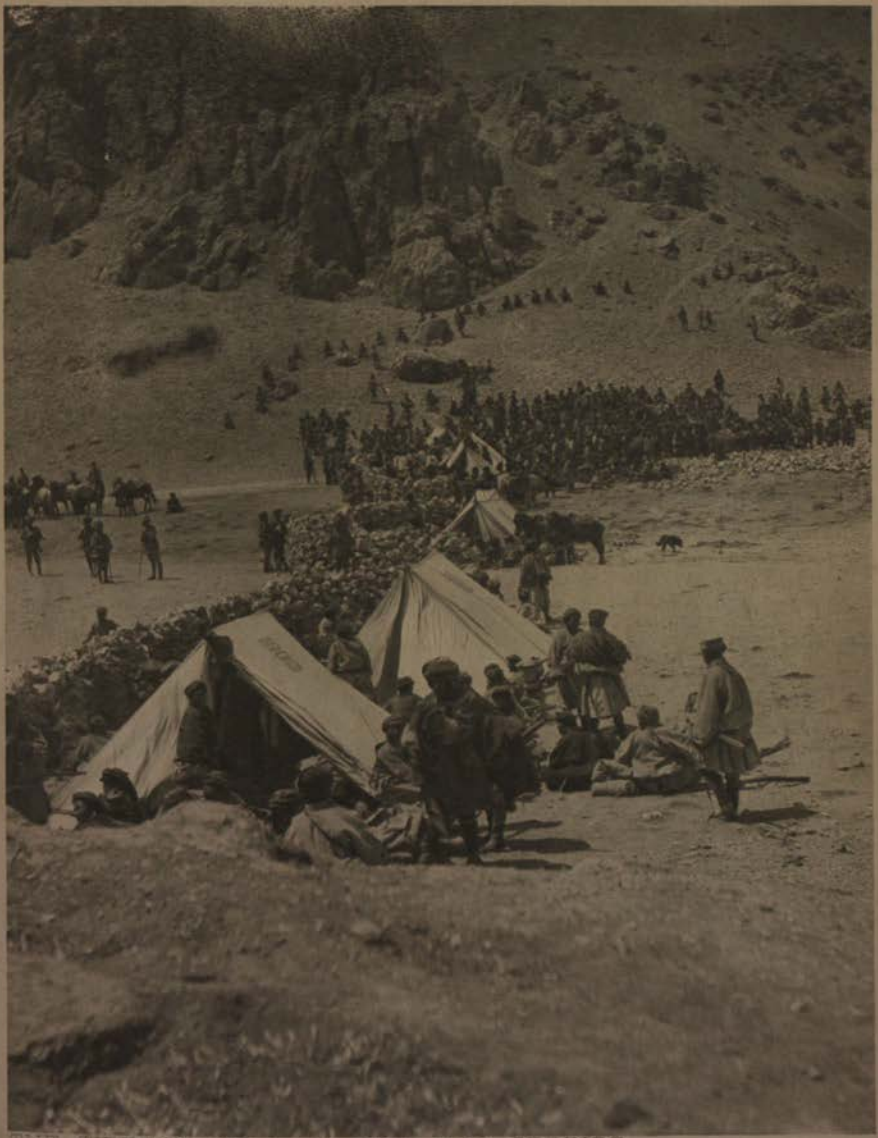
The main body of the Tibetans were bewildered, but not subdued. The whole thing must have been incomprehensible to these poor men. No order had been given to them to retreat, and they seemed to have acquiesced in their friendly expulsion by the Gurkhas and Sikh Pioneers in a dazed way. Gathered together in a body, their enormous superiority in numbers must have struck them. They had no idea, of course, of the advantage which we possessed, and there was a growing murmur as they discussed the matter excitedly behind the wall. Some of them then and there concocted a scheme which might have had terrible results, and the unwitting action of the Mission leaders almost put it into their power to carry it out. As we

afterwards found from the prisoners, they on the spot determined upon nothing less than to permit the advance guard of the expedition to go through, and then fall suddenly upon the members of the Mission themselves. The disarmament upon which the General insisted of course defeated their plans, and it was in the attempt to carry out this operation that the storm broke. When the Sikhs advanced towards the wall and began the work there was difficulty from the outset. In some cases the Tibetans actually struck the Pioneers; in others, there ensued a struggle for a weapon; but this was not immediately noticeable from where Younghusband and the General were standing, ten yards away from the house at the far end of the wall. Homer has given the explanation of what then took place. "Steel of itself," says he, "draws a man," and this handling of weapons was a terrible risk. It was almost exactly noonday.

The Dépen of Lhasa himself was the man who set the slumbering mine ablaze. He was seated on his horse just outside the wall, and, exempt himself from the confiscation of his arms, he shouted hysterically to his men to resist. They replied by stoning the Sikhs. Even then, though the whole affair hung in a slippery balance indeed, the latter held themselves in check. One of them advanced to the head of the Dépen's pony as the Lhasan General tried to move up towards the wall. In an evil moment for himself and his countrymen, the head of the great house of Lheding drew his pistol and fired, smashing the Sikh's jaw. There was an awful pause, that lasted for perhaps three seconds; and then another report broke the stillness. A jezail, for which a Sikh and a Tibetan were struggling, dis-

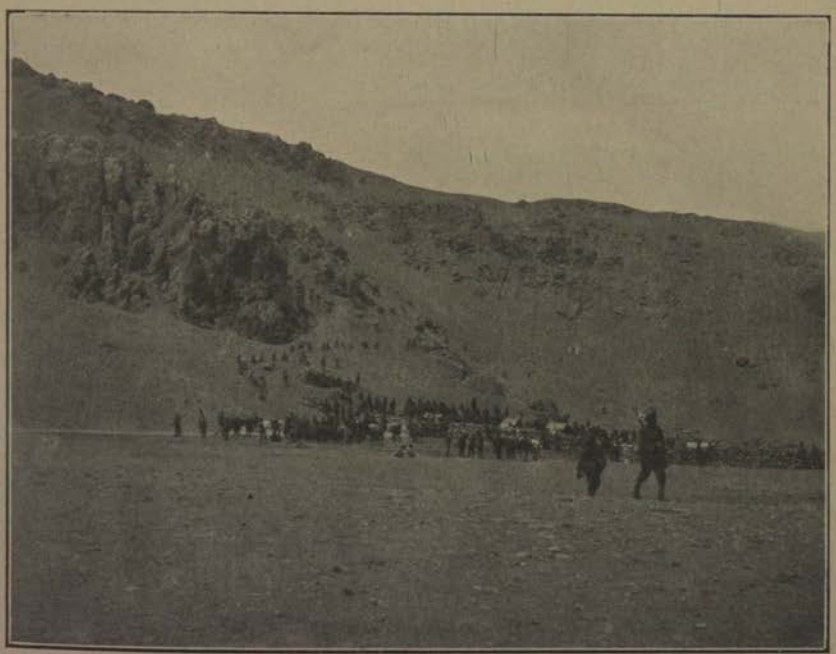
The Tibetan Wall at the Hot Springs.

THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN A FEW SECONDS BEFORE THE DISASTER OCCURRED. *Ochre and dull crimson.*



THE TIBETAN WALL AT THE HOT SPRINGS.

charged itself into the air. But it was almost unnoticed in the sudden yell with which the Tibetans hurled themselves with drawn swords against the thin line of Pioneers leaning up against the wall. Such of them as had their pieces ready fired point-blank at the Indian guard, and then dropping them, flung them-

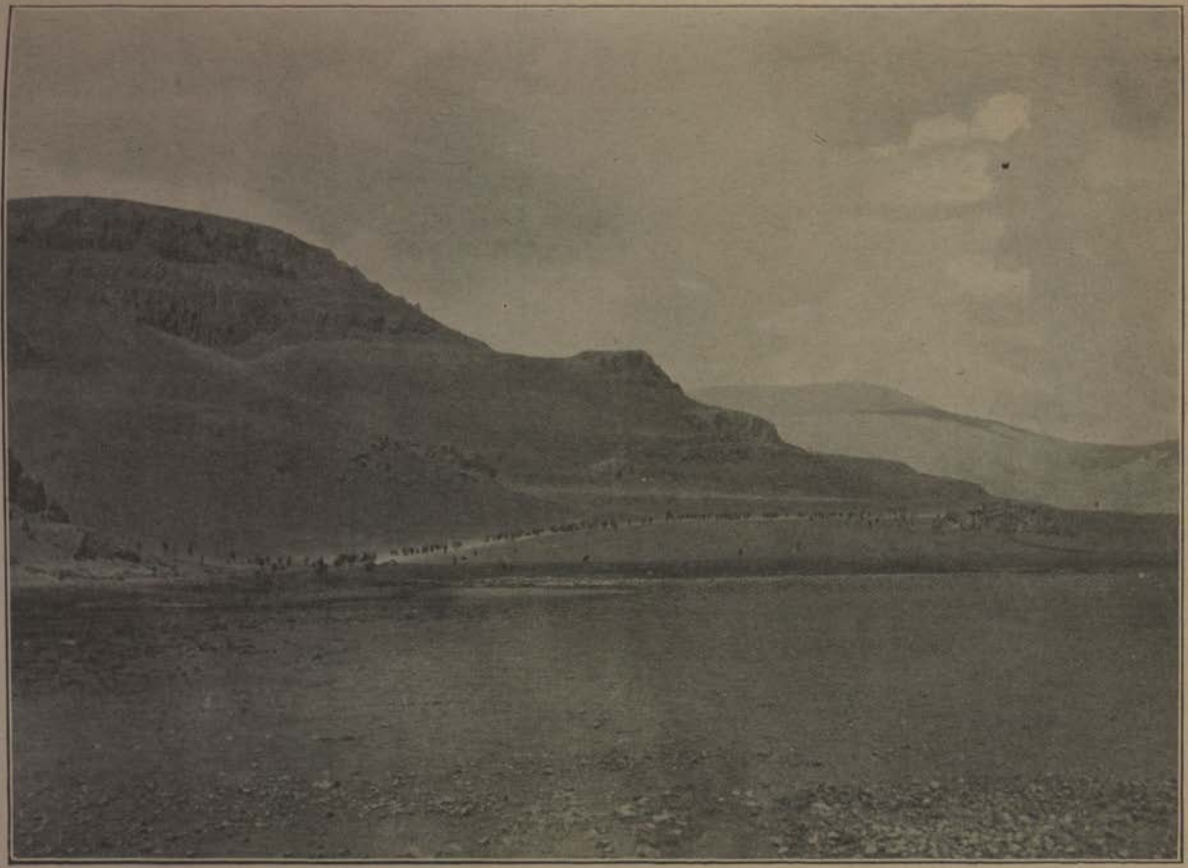


Five minutes before the disaster at Guru.

selves with their long, straight heavy swords into the melée. Two Europeans were caught inside the wall, and both were wounded. One, Mr. Candler, the correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, was severely cut about before his assailants could be shot down. The other, Major Dunlop, found himself confronted by a furious Tibetan who cut his hand upon his rifle stock with a fearful thrust before Dunlop was able to kill him.

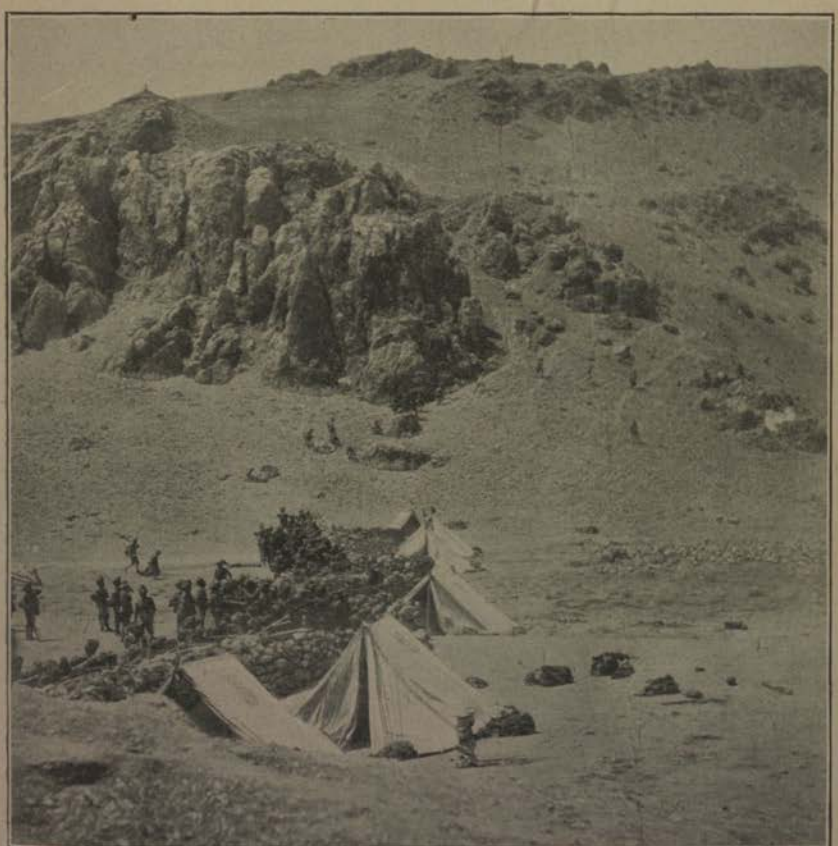
By this time the storm had broken in full intensity, and from three sides at once a withering volley of magazine fire crashed into the crowded mass of Tibetans. It was like a man fighting with a child. The issue was not in doubt, even from the first moment; and under the appalling punishment of lead, they staggered, failed and ran. Straight down the line of fire lay their only path of escape. Moved by a common impulse, the whole mass of them jostling one against another with a curious slow thrust, they set out with strange deliberation to get away from this awful plot of death. Two hundred yards away stood a sharply squared rock behind which they thought to find refuge. But the Gurkhas from above enfiladed this position and the only hope they had lay in reaching the next spur half a mile away. Had we been armed with their weapons, another hundred yards would have brought them into safety, even in the open. It was an awful sight. One watched it with the curious sense of fascination which the display of unchecked power over life and death always exerts when exercised. Men dropped at every yard. Here and there an ugly heap of dead and wounded was concentrated, but not a space of twenty yards was without its stricken and shapeless burden. At last, the slowly moving wretches—and the slowness of their escape was horrible and loathsome to us—reached the corner, where at any rate we knew them safe from the horrible lightning storm which they had themselves challenged.

All this was necessary, but none the less it sickened those who took part in it, however well they realised the fact. This was no fighting in the usual sense of the word. As soon as their first assault had failed there



The disaster at Guru: the line of escaping Tibetans.

was nothing for the Mission escort to fear, except, perhaps, the bullets of their own companions. This was so real a danger that the company of the 32nd, which had been sent round on the right, as has been



A minute after the outbreak at Hot Springs. It is remarkable that only one man has fallen where the greatest crowd existed. The terrific velocity of a modern small-bore rifle has almost no stopping power.

described, was obliged to retreat so as to leave a clear field for the fire of the Gurkhas on the slope of the spur. The guns had come into action on the right as soon as possible, but the extraordinary difference

which these high altitudes make in the burning of a fuse* nullified their work to some small extent. I do not suppose that any white man in the force was anything but sincerely glad when one more dark-coated little figure disappeared in safety behind the distant corner. But the behaviour of the native troops was beyond all praise. They had kept their temper and their discipline till it was almost beyond human endurance. And when the word was given they naturally had no mercy upon an enemy whose attempt to equalise matters by the hand-to-hand use of vastly superior numbers had been tried and failed. It was a short but a terrible lesson.

An attempt was made to defend Guru itself, two miles on, but this was easily defeated; and after leaving a small garrison in the place, the column returned to Tuna against a bitter wind and a darkening sky.

The lesson which Guru should have taught was hardly learned by the Tibetans. It should have been patent to them from that moment, that until they had adopted modern weapons and, perhaps, also had adopted some of the methods of the tribes on the north-west frontier, it would be vain for them to attempt to resist by force the progress of our troops. But every one of the men whose report might have carried weight in Lhasa was dead, and all we could ever afterwards learn suggested rather that this complete and utter rout of the pick of the Tibetan army was looked upon in Lhasa rather as a disgrace to the officers concerned than as a final proof of the foolishness of opposing us in the open field. We afterwards found that about fifteen hundred men in all had been detailed for the

* At the Karo la a distance requiring a 19 half-second fuse was only properly shelled by reducing the fuse to 9.

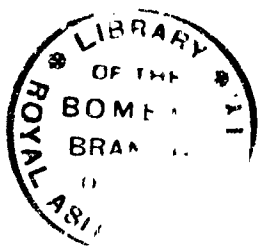
defence of the Tibetan position on this side. Another force of about one thousand men was ready to defend the road to Lhasa across the lake, where twenty-four well-made sangars had been built across the road. Another body of men, estimated variously at from two hundred to one thousand, remained in Guru when their

The disaster at Guru : our native soldiers firing from behind the Tibetan walls.

companions advanced to their position.* The troops returned to Tuna for the night, and before we advanced again, it had been found necessary to amputate Mr. Candler's left hand. He stayed at Tuna some time, and when he was well enough to be moved, returned to Darjeeling till the final advance began.

* Here, as elsewhere, it seems to me that the numbers of the enemy have been overrated in the official estimates

This incident made it imperative that the advance to Gyantse should be carried out as quickly as possible. The road was reported clear to the Kala tso. Beyond that, vague rumours reached us of a concentration of Tibetans, generally embroidered with accounts of mailed horsemen and other picturesque details, which unfortunately were never justified by the fact.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CHAPTER VI.

THE ADVANCE TO GYANTSE.

AFTER the fight at the Hot Springs the force remained at Tuna for three days. On the morning of the 4th of April the Mission and its escort moved on to Guru, passing over the scene of the sudden disaster of the previous Thursday. Everywhere, indeed, ugly traces of the tragedy were still only too visible. Everything that could possibly be done had been carried out by the medical officers, and it is only fair to record the quiet work among the Tibetan wounded which was done on their own initiative by the surgeons connected with the force. Captains Walton, Baird, and Kelly and Dr. Franklin had worked unceasingly all day on the 1st among the wounded Tibetans, and it would be difficult to describe adequately the blank amazement with which our prisoners regarded this treatment. Mercy to prisoners is not a characteristic of the Oriental, and not one of the wretched men whose wounds had rendered it impossible for them to escape or to be carried away had the least idea that any mercy except a *coup de grâce* would be extended to them. They were tenderly treated and the resources of the expedition were lavishly used. In the end the inevitable occurred, and it was with the utmost difficulty that we could shake off from us the Tibetans whom we had restored to health and strength.

The information that was received from these men was simple and always to the same effect. They had no quarrel with us; they had been driven to the front unwillingly, partly by the superstitious hold which the Lamas had over them, partly by the threat of physical punishment which the hierarchy did not fail to wield; and they realised soon enough that any attempt to stop us was not only unnecessary but impossible. At any rate they would prefer to take up any service, however menial, with us rather than go back to the tyranny of their priests. Many wounded men came in from a distance of their own accord. Morning after morning one or two dead figures would be found a few hundred yards away from our outposts—men who had been painfully trying to drag their broken bodies in to this miraculous healing of which the fame had spread far and wide. It has often been said, and no doubt said with some truth, that the work that we then did to heal our wounded enemies, besides sorely depleting our stock of bandages and other surgical necessities, was a source of weakness rather than strength to the subsequent negotiations. The methods of a Genghiz Khan would no doubt have brought our Mission to a speedier end. But knowledge is not to be confounded with wisdom, and many of our Oriental experts have forgotten in their experience of detail that, after all, the Oriental is a man. Whatever may be the ultimate success or permanence of our diplomatic relations with the present priestly government of Tibet, the reputation for magnanimity which we have secured among the poor unlettered peoples of these uplands will as a tradition long outlive the remembrance of political success, however great. Besides, the thing had to be done.

The column halted at Guru. This is an unattractive spot, bare and wind-swept, and marked only by a few disreputable houses in two clumps, gathered in each case round a house of more respectable appearance. Here the Chinese "General" Ma appeared. But Captain Parr, of the Chinese Maritime Customs, declined to

Captain O'Connor interviews the prisoners.

recognise his representative character. On the morning of the 5th, the Mission moved on past Dochen, towards Chalu by the northern shore of the lake. It was a long march, and the narrowness of the shore made it impossible to advance in more than one column. Here we struck into the heart of the land of Bogle and Turner. What they wrote 130 years ago is true to the letter to-day. The high, naked spurs which en-

close the plain upon which the Bam tso is now but a dwindling stretch, frowned upon us as we moved past the successive openings. Some grazing might perhaps be found here in the height of the summer, but in April there is no blade of vegetation except the usual wormwood. Divided from the road by a wide swamp, the waters of the lake, then partly frozen, were dotted with the innumerable wild-fowl which the previous explorers had reported. Ruddy sheldrake, pintails, bar-headed geese, pochards, terns, teal and wild-duck were all to be seen and it was easy to approach within twenty yards of them. A curious thing was here to be seen. These birds undoubtedly migrate annually across the Himalayas from the plains of India. Lower down, they had had experience enough of the meaning and danger of a man's figure. Here in Tibet, where no bird had been shot since Bogle offended the susceptibilities of his companions, they did not show the slightest fear when the long dusty column bore down upon them. But after the evening of the 5th, when shooting was for the first time permitted after our arrival in camp, the change that came over the fowl was strange indeed. In a moment they became, and remained, as shy as ever they had been in India.

Under foot, on the cinderous slopes, the only vegetation was the hard circular sponges of saxifrage or the tiny plants of edelweiss, no larger than a florin, hiding away between the boulders and the stones. Here and there a hare scurried away before the feet of the column, but it was a rare break in the monotony. Across the lake to the east, the road to Lhasa ran visibly, and away to the south-east could be seen the deserted walls and sangars of Hram, which the enemy had de-

serted during the fight at Guru. Chalu was reached about three o'clock.

The village itself lies half-way between the two lakes on the borders of the stream which flows from the Bam tso into the Kala tso, a distance of about three miles. A halt was made just where this stream leaves the former lake. It was a cold, pitiless afternoon, with a horizontal sleet blowing and the promise of heavy snow that night. A few duck were shot and a welcome store of bhusa was obtained from Chalu. Lu-chea monastery was visible half-way up the hills to the east, but it was not visited, except by a foraging party. The stream joining the two lakes is traversed by a long stone causeway, about a quarter of a mile from the upper lake, and on the following morning it was crossed by the column, who were to make only a short march that day. The road between the two lakes runs at a little height above the stream in the defile. On either side there are steep hills, and Chalu occupies the only level place beside the road. It is only a short distance before the gorge ends and the waters of the Kala tso are seen. Even the most recent map makers, I notice, have insisted that this gorge is ten miles long. It is curious that they should have persisted in this mistake in spite of the far more accurate map which Turner drew in 1784.

As one goes on an extraordinary optical illusion is seen. The Kala tso stretches out, a great shield of silver grey on the left front, and the river, some thirty feet below us on the same side, appears to run up hill into it. This illusion, which is very striking, can only be accounted for by assuming that the eye is mistaken in the apparent height of the Kala tso. This lake cer-

tainly seemed to be on a level with the path along which we were marching, and the river is perhaps only seen as an accidental item in the picture. When, however, it is perceived running close under our feet, the inference that it has to make its way up hill to fall into the lake is, I suppose, irresistible. In any case, it is a curious spectacle, and one to which Manning evidently referred in his journal, though he must have misread his notes. He records this optical illusion as visible in Red Idol Gorge. The Kala tso, on the banks of which the column halted for the night of the 6th, after a short march, is the remains of a very much larger lake, which in earlier days covered the whole plain that now lies east of its shore. The scenery was the same as before, though the scanty grass bents now become a little more frequent, and thick wormwood appeared here and there in patches on the mountain-side.

The most remarkable thing here is the evidence of a very large population in earlier days which the continuous string of ruined walls and houses supplies. For a space of nearly two miles the hill-side road—which clings still to the mountains in avoidance of the now vanished lake—is marked by a wilderness of great pebbles which have dropped from the walls and houses of a lost civilization. The ground is still marked by lines of crumbling structures held together in the ground plan of their first shape by dry layers of mud-mortar. Thousands must have lived here once. As with most other things in Tibet, there are many different reasons suggested for this wholesale desertion—a small-pox, the subsidence of the lake, the Mongol invasion, the utter inability of the inhabitants to adjust themselves to so wretched and inhospitable an environment.

Perhaps, also, the closing of the trade routes over the Sikkim passes may have had their effect. It is only clear to-day that the scanty duffle-clad figures who bow with protruded tongues at the entering in of their hamlets and the black-aureoled women whose heads appear inquisitively over the sordid sod-parapets of the roofs above are but the hundredth part of the population of a scattered but important trade centre in the past.

From Menza, where the column halted on the night of the 7th, the long-deferred descent on the northern side of this vast water-shed begins, and with it the course of the Nyang chu. This stream does not run from the Kala tso, as is represented by many maps. It rises in a full head of water that breaks from under an old glacier bed which fronts the eastern end of the Kala plain, and flows with an even and increasing current in a northerly direction. The plain which has to be crossed before Menza is reached is the last of the long, dreary plateau which begins 50 miles back at Kamparab, and though later in the year purple vetches flourish, they barely dissemble the utter barrenness of the long, dry, dreary road. All this plateau is 15,000 feet in height. Vegetation of any height greater than that of a brush or wormwood is impossible, and the continued absence of trees, to those accustomed to the vegetation of England or India, is wearisome in the extreme.

On the night of the 8th of April, the camp was pitched upon a projecting tongue of land which juts out with steep cliffs between two beds of the upper waters of the Nyang chu. Away to the south and south-east the great icy barrier between Bhutan and Tibet rose high

in the air. In front of us, down the valley to the north, there was at least the promise of mountains free from snow. Even of Chumolhari itself we were weary to death, and we passed out of sight of that magnificent mass without any sensation except relief. The night was without incident and a start was made on the following morning, down the valley, from the end of which, forty miles away, we were to see the goal of our march—Gyantse.

The descent of the valley of the Nyang chu is picturesque and of growing interest. At the upper end the river winds between sedgy swamps, over which we found it difficult to take the animals. Lower down ruined village after village betrayed the hopelessness of agriculture among these barren heights. The first still inhabited houses are found at a place called Samonda, where Turner stayed a night in 1783; and it is difficult to imagine any place in the world which must have remained so absolutely unchanged from that time to this. Samonda is within a few hundred yards of Pikya Monastery; and here for the first time we saw a very characteristic and common thing. On the side of the hill over the entrance to the gompa there is inlaid in large fragments of quartzite a Tibetan text. This one is wholly illegible, but it probably indicates some pious expression of the over-lordship of the Precious Teacher of Tashi-lhunpo. The place itself is the haunt of dogs and ravens; it is inhabited, but that is about all that can be said for it. When we passed it the rooms and courts were deserted, and locks on every door betrayed the timidity of the late occupants. So far as the eye could reach, the prospect was bare. A cold grey scrub was shaking in the bitter

The upper treeless reaches of the Nyang chu Valley, near Menza.

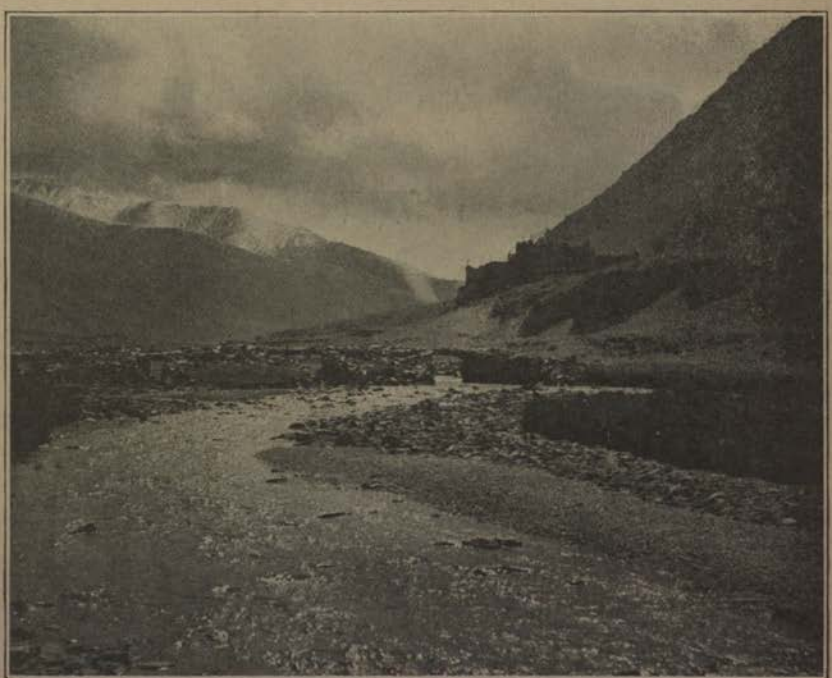
wind and the snow of last night came far down the chimneys and crannies of the iron hill-sides. But the backbone of the Himalayas had been crossed and two or three miles farther on down the valley we saw, with a gratitude which can hardly be believed, the first tree in Tibet. This grows beside the little house which is

The first tree in Tibet, at Laden, in the Nyang chu Valley.

dignified with the name of Laden, and even the need for fuel of our post at Menza, which was afterwards moved considerably nearer to the spot, was never supplied at the expense of this solitary willow.

There is very little to describe along this road. At a place which was officially and wrongly reported to be Tandesa there is a pleasant plantation of birches with

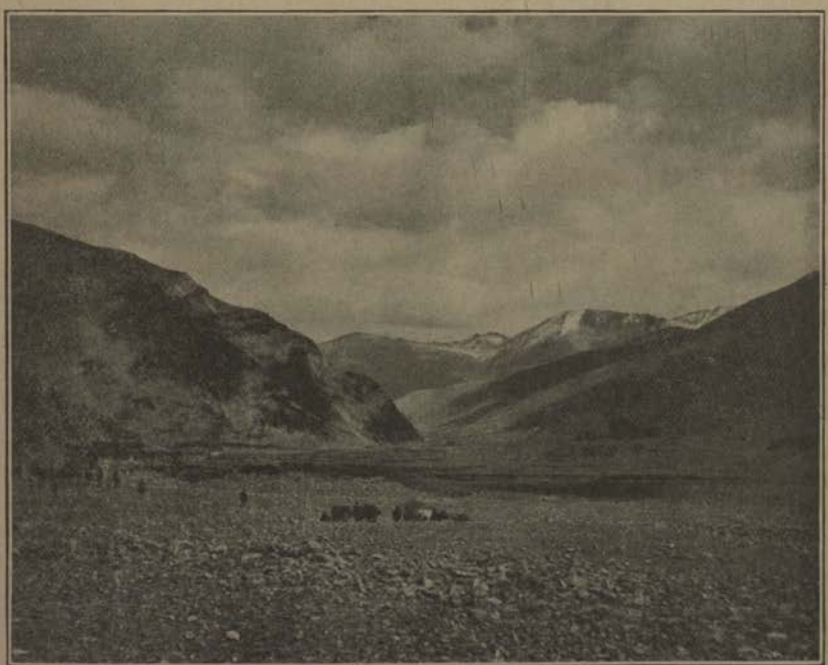
an abandoned house just inside them. Across the way to the right there are two houses, the occupants of which brought us fodder for our horses and two little bowls full of the curious potentilla root of Tibet. This is a white tuber which tastes not unlike a ripe filbert, and grows in brown-skinned fingers from two to four



Bridge over the Nyang chu above Kang-ma.

inches in length. It is a pleasant variety of food, but it is not as commonly found in Tibet as one had been led to suppose. Still pursuing our way down the valley, we were at last brought to a halt five miles above Kang-ma beside a ruined temple of some size, by the news that the Tibetans had built a long wall across the valley about four miles ahead. A halt was ordered and

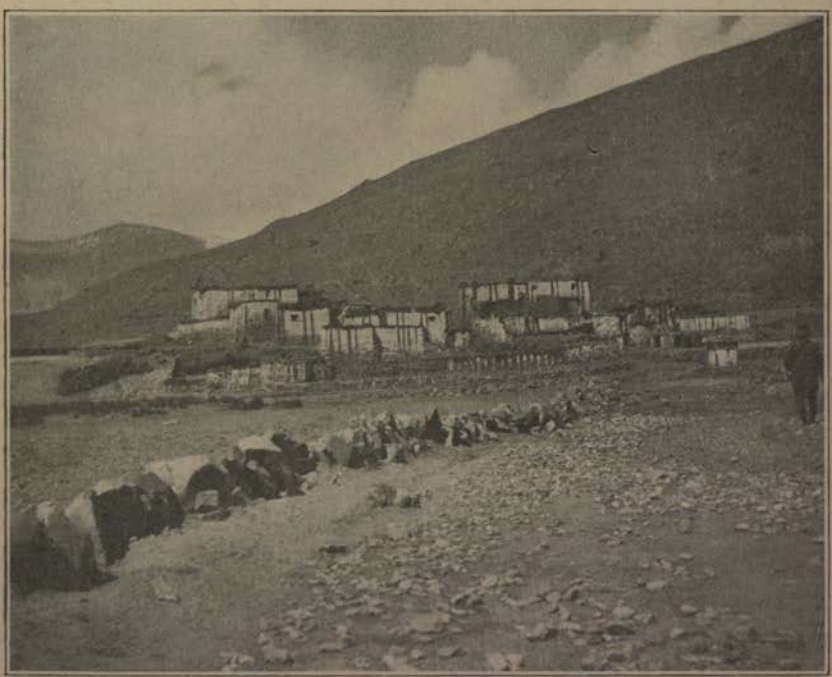
the valley ahead reconnoitred. Lieutenant Bailey, with a few mounted infantry, pushed up over the mountains on the right and reported afterwards that the Tibetans in great numbers were holding a four-hundred-yard wall across the valley, and that a series of well-constructed



Across the valley at the end is a thin sloping line. This was the wall built by the Tibetans to oppose our progress half a mile south of Kang-ma. It was abandoned by them at the last moment. To the right is the gompa, afterwards used by us as a fortified post.

sangars in échelon had been constructed up the mountain-side. On their right the bluff was precipitous to their left front. Unfortunately, also, his appearance scared them from the whole position, and on the following morning, after an elaborate and careful order of advance had been arranged, we found ourselves checked for an hour in front of a wall, which had, as a matter

of fact, been entirely abandoned. This was demolished, and we moved on past Kang-ma and past the famous hot springs by the side of the road to Lamda, where the night was spent. These hot springs have evidently been far more numerous in the past than they now are, and the whole of the eastern side of the valley is



Kang-ma ; to the right, the road to Lhasa through Nyeru and Ra-lung ; straight on, the road to Gyantse.

banked up with the deposits held in solution by the warm bubbling water. Quiet little geysers rise each from a basin at the top of a small conical hill which they have themselves made in the course of many years. Beside the road there are two springs now running. The first is not perceptibly warm ; I think the temperature at about noon was found to be 76° Fahr. ; the

second, a much more vigorous fountain, was, when I tested it on my return journey, a good deal over blood-heat,* and a considerable growth of vivid green weed flourishes in the warmth and wetness it provides. Beyond Lamda, Red Idol Gorge awaited us.

Red Idol Gorge is a peculiar feature—perhaps the

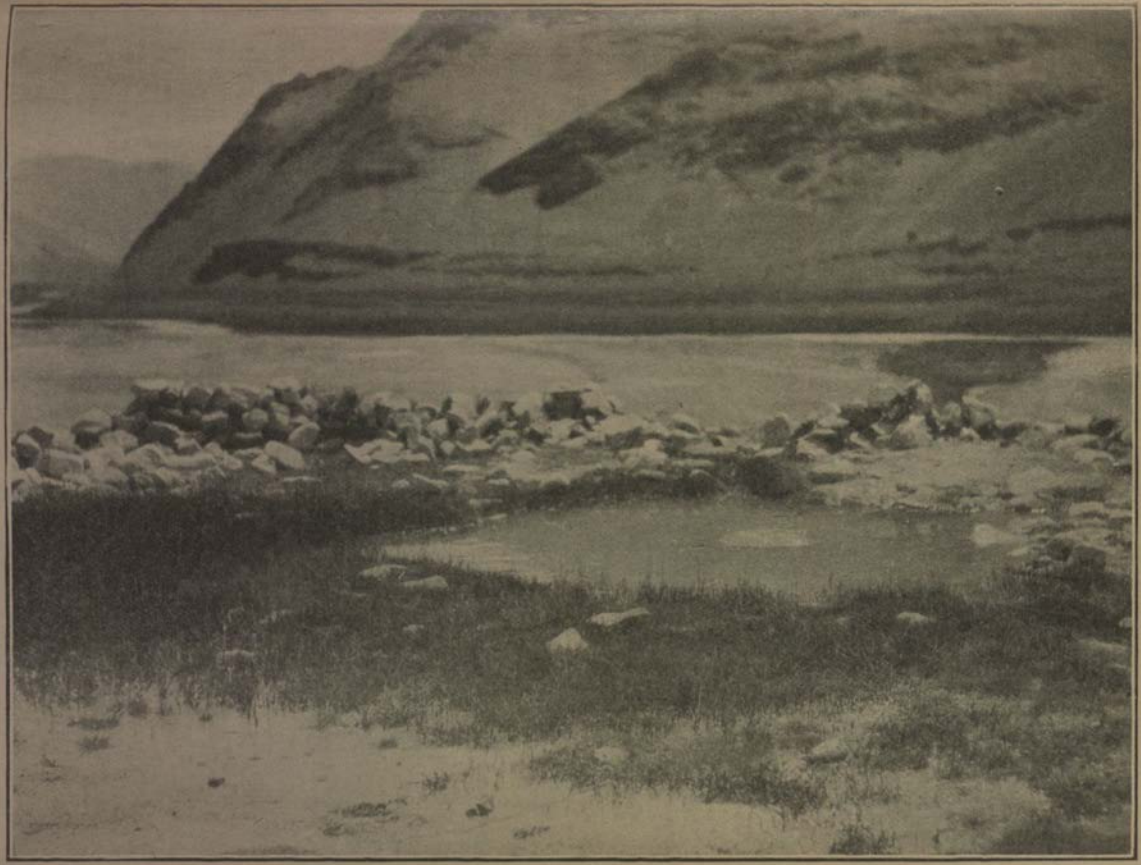
Kang-ma.

most peculiar feature—of the road between Phari and Gyantse. Turner in 1784 noted the curious turn which the river here makes in his map, but otherwise makes very little reference either to it or to any other natural feature of the road. Short as it is, however, his description is good enough. "We came at length

* I had no thermometer with me, but judging from the heat of a similar bath, I should say that it was about 108°.

to a road much encumbered with huge blocks of broken rock. The river had a considerable fall. On either side rose huge rocks, perpendicular and bare, vast impending crags."

The Tibetan name of this place is Zam-trang. The Chinese name is Hong-pûsa, and it is from this last, of course, that the name "Red Idol Gorge" is taken. The approach to the actual gorge has an interest of its own. Leaving the plain on which Lamda is built, the first thing that a traveller notices halfway up the cliff on the left-hand side is a deep recess in the cliff before which altar-like stones, deeply raddled with red-crimson and marked all round with prayer flags, indicate a more than usually sacred spot. The road descends still. As the descent becomes steeper the bald red spurs of the perpendicular cliffs close inwards more and more; and the river turns sharply just where a projecting spur on the right bank hides the actual entrance to the gorge. Immediately in front the road curves on at the foot of a frowning cliff; to the left a huge promontory halts abruptly over the foaming waters of the stream; and an interlocking slant of rock hides the further progress both of road and river. The column moved on till the spur was reached. It was then clear that the Tibetans intended to defend what would have been an almost impregnable position had they been armed with fire-arms of any pattern later than those of the end of the seventeenth century. They had mounted on the top of the high left-hand cliff six or eight jingals, and they continually used those antiquated cannon, of which the weakly-thrown ball was scarcely more effective than the deep-throated roar with which the explosion filled the ravines and curtains of the cañon.



The famous hot spring of Kang-ma. Its temperature is about 108°.

The Gurkhas were sent forward by Macdonald to scale the cliffs on the left, and, while the other troops were held back, we watched their straggling figures painfully climbing up the steep slopes across the river. They had a long climb before them, and long before they had even broken the back of their work, before even the guns were used, a heavy storm of sleet and snow crept up the valley from the north. It was not perhaps a very serious matter in itself, but the difficulty caused by it lay in the fact that the Gurkhas and the main body were entirely hidden from each other. The halt became a long and tedious affair. A messenger was sent to recall the Gurkhas, but, as we afterwards heard, he must have mistaken either his instructions or his way: certainly he never reached the party. The protracted halt was still continued, and then, upon the representation of Colonel Brander of the 32nd Pioneers, that regiment was allowed to go forward and clear the gorge. It proved upon trial to be no difficult task. The mounted infantry followed close behind the 32nd, and the pursuit of the Tibetans below began at the same time as the Gurkhas made their first advance upon the heights overhead where the guns were stationed.

At this point the river escapes between two confronting bluffs and takes a sharp turn to the south-west, just where a reddened heap of stones decked with flag streamers marks the point which has given the gorge its Chinese name. This was the centre of the Tibetan position. They had thrown out some men ahead of it, and these men were not devoid of pluck; but the inferiority of their weapons was their ruin. Again and again a Tibetan would lie in wait behind a rock till the oncoming soldier was almost within bayonet thrust

of him. He would rise suddenly before the astonished Sikh, discharge his piece wildly into the air, and bolt. It need not be said that the fight was a short one. In this broken ground, underneath precipitous mountain-sides, where the rocks lay as they had fallen for a thousand years, it was difficult to trace the dun figures as they dodged and hid all over the colourless mountain-side. Scores of them still remained with their muskets loaded and their quick-matches alight, ready for one desperate attempt before death. Until they had ridden through the gorge itself, the mounted men were almost useless, but the 32nd had all their work cut out for them in clearing yard by yard the broken and precipitous ground which hems in the river on both sides. One or two of them were wounded, but considering the point-blank range at which they were compelled to receive a large part of the enemy's fire, it is astounding that so few were hit. From above, on both sides, the roar of jingals was continually heard, and every now and again a wildly-aimed ball splashed into the stream beside the rock.

The river takes another turn a mile afterwards, and resumes at an angle of 300 degrees its downward northerly course. Here a small tributary pours itself into it from the west, and a stretch of flat ground in both the greater and the lesser valleys allowed the mounted infantry to make use of their superior pace. The Gurkhas by this time were diligently clearing the heights above, round which the zigzag river takes its course. There was nothing more to do except to complete the pursuit, and after a halt, which was to some of us saddened by the sight of a few wounded Tibetans pitifully tended by their half-distraught wives at two

Red Idol Gorge.

IT IS A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO MAKE OUT THE IDOL ITSELF, BUT THE STREAMERS OF PRAYER-FLAGS TO RIGHT AND LEFT WILL LEAD THE EYE TO THE ROUGH SEMBLANCE OF A SEATED FIGURE BY THE SIDE OF THE TRACK ALONG WHICH THE MAXIM IS BEING TAKEN. *Rufous ochres, the idol weather-stained crimson, stream clear.*

RED IDOL GORGE

little houses at the junction of the streams, the force moved on to Saugang.

Just before this point is reached, deeply-cut figures of Buddha in the spurs on the eastern cliff-side remind one of the descriptions of earlier travellers. The night

The rock-cut Buddhas at the north entrance to Red Idol Gorge.

was spent at Saugang, and by the latest reports, subject in some cases to the slight modifications required by the personal element, about a hundred and eighty Tibetans seem to have been killed at this point. On the next day we moved on along the alternate narrows and alluvial ledges of the Nyang chu, passing the ruined jong upon the conical hill in mid-road, the ice curtain

in the gateway beneath the water channel overhead, and the whitewashed brakes of leafless and thorny willow-scrub, until Né-nyeng was reached. But there was no more spirit left in the Tibetan host. This position, which they afterwards defended with gallantry, was found by us almost abandoned to women and children. We made a short halt, during which time the steward of the monastery brought out the usual ceremonial katags and offerings, and received the usual assurances from us, and then passing underneath the "two-legged chorten" astride the road we at last turned the spur which had hidden from us the sight of Gyantse jong, rising, Gibraltar-like, seven miles away at the apparent end of the long level plain before us.

The question that now exercised the General was whether the jong would be defended or not. It was apparent, even at this distance, that it would be no light matter to drive an enemy, however weakly armed, from so strong a position, and we were, as a matter of fact, confronted by the easier slopes of the rock upon which it is built. There is no approach on the western side. Standing out as it does in the plain, joined only by a narrow saddle to the hills beside and above it, the jong is a formidable fort indeed. There was some delay about crossing the river, and then the column encamped above the river flats on the edge of the wide, fertile plain.

Emissaries came out from Gyantse—the Jong-pen and the Chinese General Ma who had first accosted us at Guru. The Jong-pen put the whole situation clearly enough. On the one hand, he said, if he were to surrender the jong to us, his throat would be cut by the

Dalai Lama; on the other hand, he said, with naïve simplicity, that as all his soldiers had run away, he was not able to offer any effective opposition to our occu-

The Jong-pen of Gyantse who surrendered the fort to the expedition, and lived at Chang-lo throughout the investment as a hostage.

pation of it. This was indeed true. Hundreds of Tibetan soldiers during the last halt made by us on the plain took advantage of our inaction to escape, carrying with them, it was reported, most of the avail-

able weapons from the jong and town. The Jong-pen of Gyantse is a kindly heavy old man like a saddened Falstaff; and it was with considerable regret that we were obliged to disregard his petitions. As events proved, however, it would have been a wiser thing if, instead of a temporary occupation of the fort, followed by inadequate demolitions near the two main gateways, we had boldly undertaken to occupy the place. Meanwhile it was clear that the Tibetans could not be allowed to remain undisturbed in the fort which commanded the country round. They were indeed promised that no harm should be done to anyone in the place, and that the temples of the jong and of the town should remain untouched if, on their side, the Tibetans behaved with straightforwardness to us. We camped for the night beside a new and well-built house, and on the following morning moved in, prepared both for treachery and for the task, if need be, of taking the fort by storm. There was, however, no necessity for apprehension. The Jong-pen and the Chinese General came out to meet us and surrendered the entire place. Still, precautions were not relaxed until the small party of pioneers, which we sent forward to investigate the ruined walls and towers that crowned the great rock, had climbed to the topmost pinnacle, and the Union Jack run up beside the gilt copper finial which marked the highest point. The utmost courtesy was shown to the Jong-pen, and he in his turn, though it must be feared with a heavy heart, undertook to help in the collection of necessary foodstuffs from the town and from the surrounding villages. Already a cursory examination of the storehouses and cellars of the jong had shown that the whole place was one gigantic granary. All was not, of course, discovered

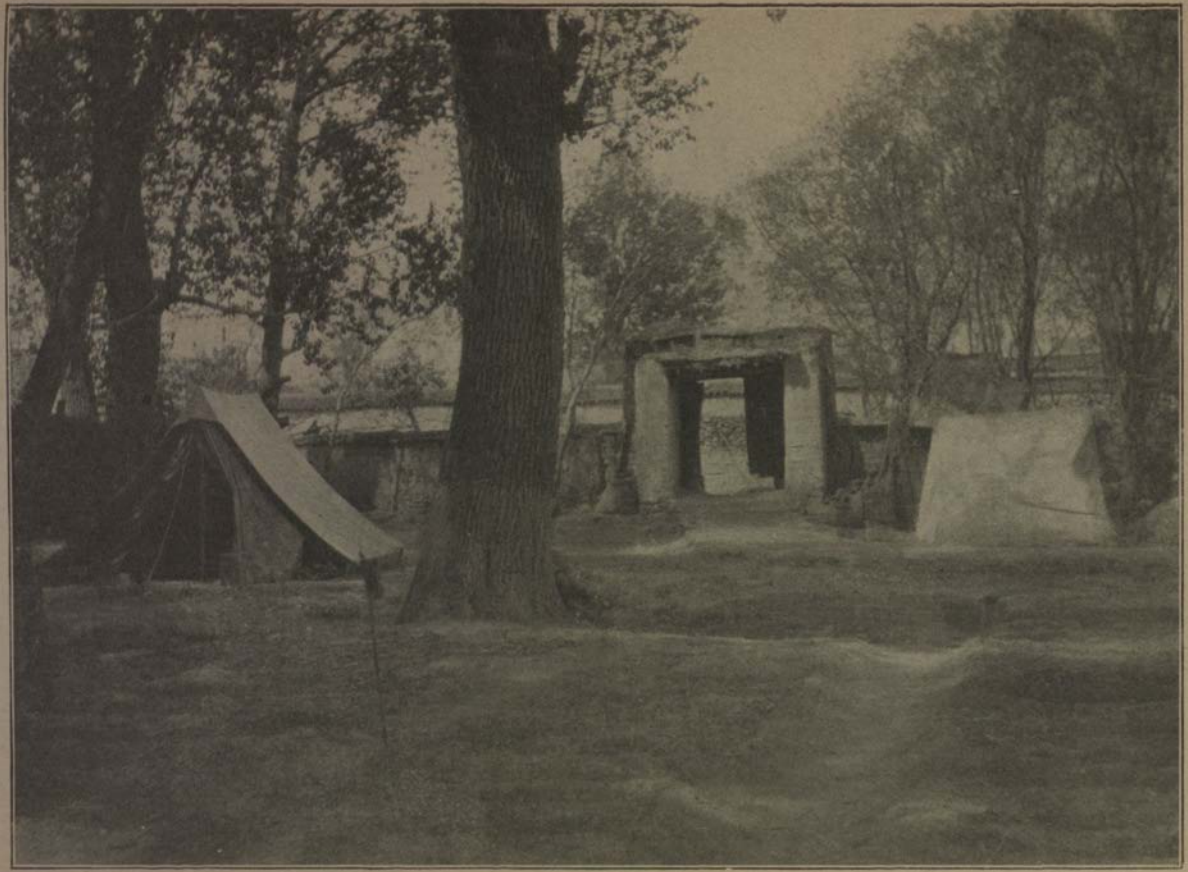
The surrender of Gyantse jong by the Chinese "General" Ma. Captain Parr is introducing him to Brigadier-General Macdonald. Ma is wearing the usual sun-shutters to keep the glare from his eyes.

at first, but nearly eight thousand maunds* of grain and tsamba were found inside the store-rooms of this fort alone. Two positions were selected by the military authorities as suitable for the residence of the Mission. One of them, Chang-lo, lay at the head of the approach across the Nyang chu, 1,350 yards from the large modern barrack round which the defences on the jong were centred. The other lay within 500 yards of the rock, and (as the jong was not occupied by our troops) would have proved utterly untenable in the circumstances which afterwards resulted in the practical investment of the Mission post. As it was, Chang-lo, the place occupied by Colonel Younghusband, was unpleasantly near and a thousand yards within the range of a Tibetan jingal. The following day the work of collecting the foodstuffs of the jong began under the able generalship of Major Bretherton, and the long convoys of mules began to go backwards and forwards between Chang-lo and the jong. Small bodies of mounted men went out to report upon the stores that could be supplied by the surrounding villages, and the amount far exceeded that reported as likely by the Mission. On the fourth day, Colonel Younghusband and the men moved into the smaller of the two compounds which comprise Chang-lo. It was a pretty place. A beautifully painted and columned open room opened upon a small courtyard, in the south wall of which was a gateway leading straight out on to a gravelled court in which the finest poplar trees we ever saw in Tibet rose bare and branching over our heads. The

* The maund used in the north-east of India weighs 80 lbs. This was, during the expedition, the accepted unit of measurement, and was also the normal weight carried by a single coolie.

other part of Chang-lo consisted of a very irregularly shaped building which probably represented the actual daily living-house of the ducal family of Chang-lo. It was very thickly built, and presented its most impregnable side towards the jong. This peculiarity, which was common enough in the houses of the plain to suggest that it was not wholly unintentional, proved afterwards the salvation of the situation. The place was capable of defence, and to the south, away from the jong, a thick plantation of leafless willow-thorns was carpeted from end to end with iris. The river ran beside us sixty yards away, turning in its course towards the far distant spur upon which the scattered houses and temples of Tse-chen were built. Other white houses dotted the plain on all sides within a mile, and twelve hundred yards away to the north-east the little village of Pala, then deserted, guarded the road to Lhasa.

It is worth while to review the political situation at the time of our arrival at Gyantse. Colonel Younghusband had sent a letter to the Amban announcing to him the impending arrival of the British Mission, and requesting him to come to Gyantse to discuss the terms of the agreement, bringing with him properly qualified Tibetan representatives of sufficiently high rank. This letter was sent off during the march up, but I do not suppose that anyone in the force really believed that the Tibetans were willing to treat with us. The news of their loss at Tuna was brought to the Lhasan authorities in a wholly mendacious form. It is easy to see how the incidents of that unfortunate day lent themselves to misconstruction. It was reported, and believed, in Lhasa that the English had



Inside the Mission compound at Chang-lo.

decoyed the Tibetan soldiers away from their defences and had then wantonly shot them down. The truth was indeed known to the friendly States of Bhutan and Nepaul, but these carry little weight in Tibetan councils. The only man in Lhasa who seems to have understood the gravity of the situation was Dorjieff himself. His action was immediate and characteristic. As soon as the news arrived of our occupation of Gyantse he suggested to the Tibetans the advisability of overwhelming the Mission by a night attack. This had been proposed by him already, while the Mission were still encamped at Kamba-jong, and it is likely that the retirement of the Mission from that place was rendered doubly ignominious in the eyes of the Tibetans because they believed our evacuation to be directly due to the attack for which they were preparing. Dorjieff was, however, far from confident as to the upshot of this experiment. He realised, better perhaps than anyone else in Lhasa, that if the small force accompanying Colonel Younghusband were able to force its way on to the capital they would unhesitatingly do so. The name of Younghusband is unpleasantly well known in the chancelleries of St. Petersburg. He has never been associated with want of enterprise or of readiness to seize the least opportunity afforded by his opponent, but his far-sighted prudence was perhaps better recognised still. That the Colonel should have decided to remain in Gyantse with a small escort while Macdonald returned to the Chumbi Valley to organise arrangements for a further advance to Lhasa cannot, therefore, have seemed to Dorjieff to be the rashness of an over-confident man. So far Dorjieff's influence with the Dalai Lama was unimpaired; his position in the country was

however weakened, not only because in spite of his assurances the English had actually been able to penetrate into the country, but also because it was now becoming known that Japan was actually at war with Russia, a disquieting suggestion of the latter's real strength. News of the Russian defeats did not reach Lhasa until the middle of May, if information received there is to be trusted. Dorjieff, therefore, determined, after setting the fuse alight, to make the best of his way to a place of safety. If the British Mission were annihilated he could always return and claim the credit of the suggestion. If, on the other hand, the English were able to beat off the attack, Dorjieff foresaw only too clearly that his influence in Lhasa was doomed, and that even the Dalai Lama himself could not protect him.

While the Tibetans were preparing to send a fresh force for this hostile purpose they naturally refused to allow the Amban to negotiate with the Mission. The Viceroy himself repeatedly saw the Dalai Lama in person, but could get nothing from him ; to his demands for transport and for responsible and accredited representatives of Tibet in the forthcoming negotiations no answer was returned. At one time he thought that when it came to the point the Tibetan government would hesitate to repudiate in any direct manner the suzerainty which he represented. He therefore bluntly reminded them that he was acting under the orders of the Chinese Emperor in demanding that they should negotiate ; he added that the responsibility of acquiescing in the refusal of the Tibetans was so serious that he declined to be any party to their action. The order had been given and signed with the vermilion

pencil—those orders he intended to carry out. The immediate answer of the Dalai Lama was an assumption of all responsibility for the action of the Tibetan government. He said that he was willing to accept the onus of acting in contravention of his suzerain's commands.

Meanwhile, Colonel Younghusband found himself in a difficult position. The advance to Gyantse had been accepted as inevitable by the home government. But they did not believe that it would be necessary to make any further advance, and their policy at this time assumed the ultimate submission of the Tibetan government during this phase of our relations with the country, and Younghusband, in some way which is neither entirely clear nor entirely fair, was regarded as unduly anxious to press on to the capital. This was true in so far as that he recognised the importance, in dealing with Oriental nations, of concluding the treaty in no place short of the capital. Sound as this theory is in all cases, it is especially so in the case of Tibet. Gyantse is a place, the political importance of which has been greatly over-rated; the truth is, that no city or district, except Lhasa, is of any political importance whatever. A treaty signed at Gyantse might have achieved one object. It might have given us a satisfactory basis for insisting, when we thought fit, upon the observation of its terms. But as binding the hierarchy of Lhasa it was of no more real importance than the treaty of 1890–3, which they had repudiated. Colonel Younghusband appreciated the difficulty of securing any finality in our relations with the Dalai Lama by negotiations at Gyantse, but he was throughout perfectly willing to accept the opinion of the Government and

negotiate at this place. He may have regarded it as a half measure, but he recognised the necessity of carrying out his orders to the letter, if it were possible for him to do so. At the same time he also recognised the improbability of getting the Tibetans to co-operate.

Tradition and experience alike had combined to persuade the Tibetans of the truth of Disraeli's statement that delay is the secret of success. They had always succeeded in the past by a policy of abstention; why, then, even if we were able to reach a town of the political insignificance of Gyantse, should they be induced to abandon the policy which had served them in good stead for so many centuries? The Dalai Lama had perhaps good reason for his confidence. He remembered that assurances had been received long ago from a trustworthy source that the British Government were opposed to the risks involved by sending troops farther into Tibet. It is true that he cannot be supposed to have understood the enormous advantage which the Parliamentary system of England put into his hands: he cannot have known that there was any serious criticism of Lord Curzon's policy in England: of the chance—which seemed to us in Tibet to be a considerable one—of a change of policy as the result of a General Election he can have known nothing. But there were many other things which may have influenced him in risking our unwillingness to proceed farther into the country. In the first place, first by a long interval, Lhasa had never before been reached, and he may well have trusted to the experience of history. In the second place, he probably imagined that the advance to Lhasa would necessitate the employment of a very much larger force than that with which we had reached

Gyantse, and no one knows so well as a Tibetan the impracticability of taking large bodies of men over these high uplands without long and careful preparation. Then, again, he looked forward to the evacuation of southern Tibet by the English as a matter of necessity, not so much because they were unable to withstand the climate there as because it was impossible to maintain communications during the winter over the terrible passes of the Chumbi Valley. Delay, therefore, was his obvious policy. It is an odd thought that if he had limited himself to this, his opposition might perhaps have been successful.

Of all these considerations, Colonel Younghusband was fully aware. He did not for a moment believe that negotiation at Gyantse could be carried through. His knowledge of Oriental habits and thought told him unerringly that in the capital only was there a chance of making such an impression as might secure the due observations of the treaty. But, on the other hand, his instructions from home were clear enough, and for some time, while the matter hung in the balance, it must have been difficult for him to see how any middle course was possible which would enable Lord Curzon to achieve even the most moderate triumph in the face of misconceptions in Whitehall. As we now know, the Tibetans all along were on the point of settling the matter by their own foolish action, but until the early days of May the outlook was blank indeed.

In the light of after events it was lucky that during those first three weeks after our arrival at Gyantse we did not let the grass grow under our feet. Much had to be done by the military authorities in putting

Chang-lo into a proper state of defence, but for the members of the Mission, excepting Captain Ryder, R.E., and Captain Walton, I.M.S., there was little to do. Negotiation of any kind was obviously not intended by the Tibetans, and some of us spent our time in making expeditions to every point of interest in Gyantse and in the plain around.

CHAPTER VII.

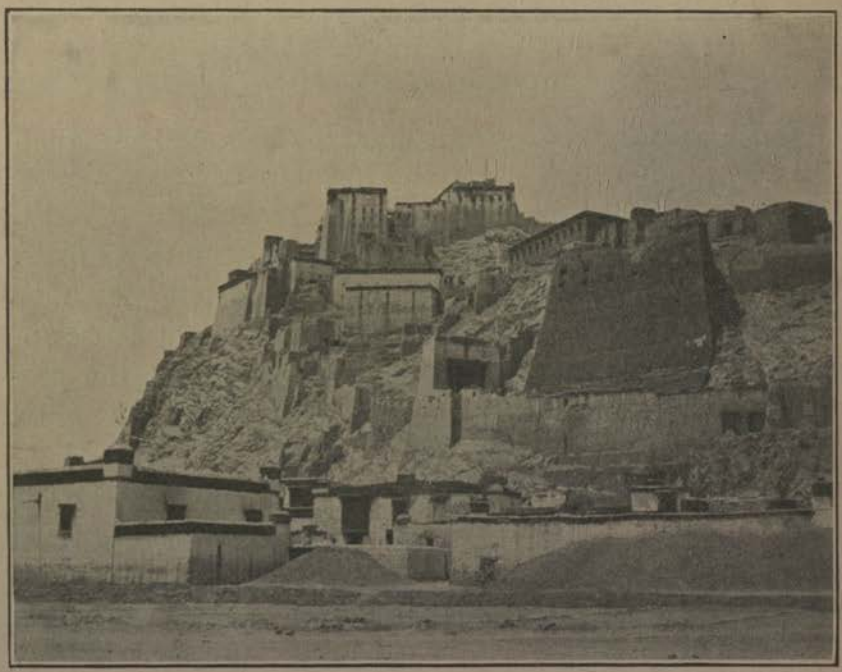
ARRIVAL AT GYANTSE.

THE first view of Gyantse is imposing. Across the wide, level plain, cultivated in little irregular patches as closely as an English county, the high-walled peak from which the town gets its name* rises 500 feet into the air. From the first the jong fills the eye, and it is not until one is close that the low, white two-storeyed houses of the town are seen at its foot, nestling under the protection of the battlements and bastions of the great fort.

So huge is the mass of masonry and sun-dried brick with which the steep and isolated hill is crowned, that it is a matter of some surprise that it has received scanty or no attention from the few travellers who have passed beneath it. Manning, indeed, in 1811, refers to it as "a sort of castle on the top of a hill," a somewhat inadequate description of a pile of buildings hardly less in size than those of Mont St. Michel. Ruinous it was even in April, but that was hardly perceptible at a distance, and the apparent strength of the huge towers and curtains which overhang the almost precipitous

* The name is written RGYAL-RTSE and means "Royal Peak." The "n" is merely an example of a common tendency to nasalise the close of a first syllable. "Palden Lhamo" is almost invariably pronounced "Panden Lhamo." The great monastery at Gyantse is often called the "Palkhor choide."

rock would, one thinks, have impressed the most incurious of observers, among whom Manning, the only Englishman who has ever reached Lhasa, is unfortunately to be placed. Even in its existing condition, a week's siege and a couple of hundred casualties would have been the price of any attempt on our part to take the



The gateway and neighbouring buildings of Gyantse jong.

successive defences by storm in the face of the slightest really well-handled opposition.

Leaving the level of the town at the south-eastern corner of the rock—which is 400 or 500 yards in length—one makes one's way up the zigzag approach hewn out of the side of the ochreous quartz-seamed sandstone. The roadway, after running the gauntlet of a

The jong at Gyantse from the north-east.

The great gate of Gyantsé.

THIS HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN BLOWN TO PIECES, BUT IT IS PERHAPS WORTH RECORDING AS AN EXAMPLE OF TYPICAL TIBETAN ARCHITECTURE.

By the Author.

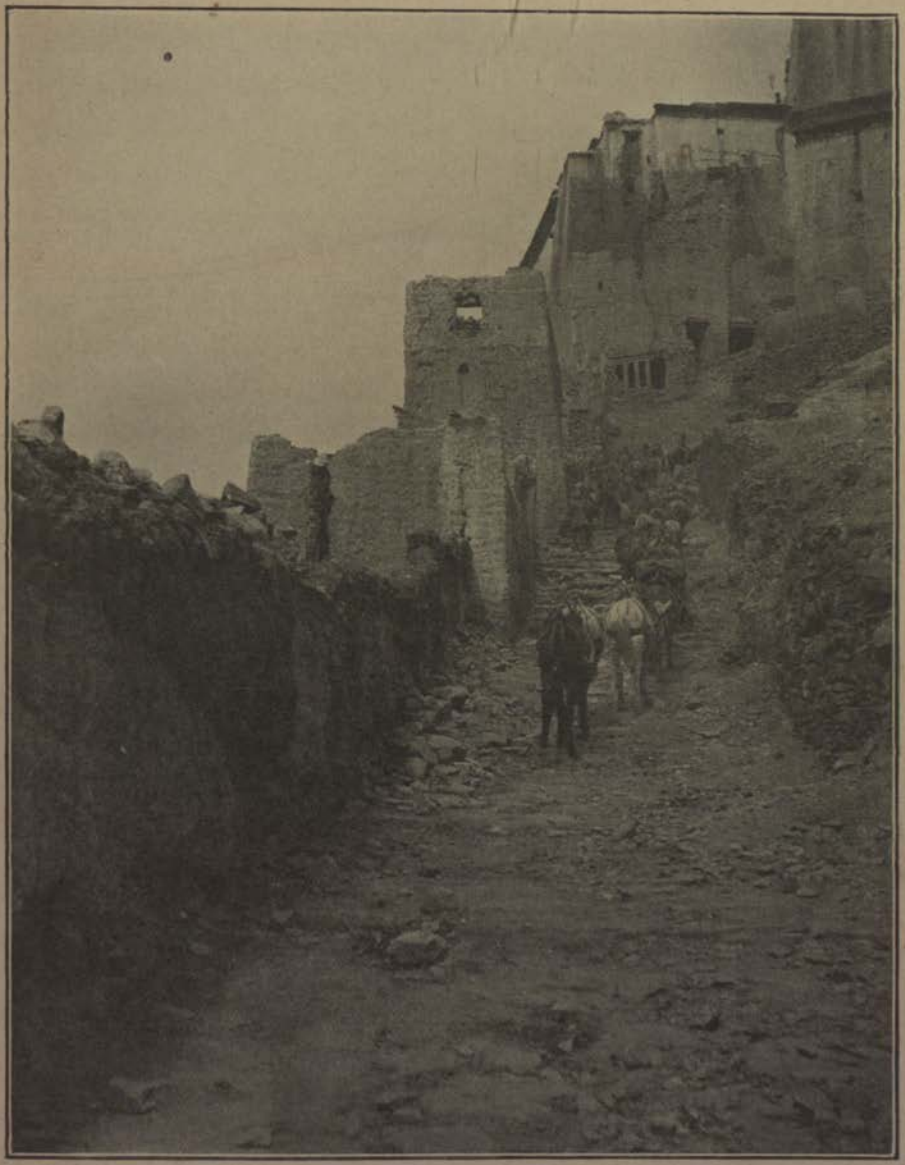
THE GREAT GATEWAY OF GYANTSE JONG.

large detached bastion built against the flank of the almost perpendicular stone, leads up to the great gateway, in the deep recess of which—then partly supported by two stout wooden pillars and of no great strength—there hung from the ceiling four huge stuffed carcases of dongs or wild yaks, with artificial eyes and tongues

Stuffed yaks hanging from the ceiling of the main gateway of the jong.

protruding in a fearsome way. But the beasts were falling to pieces from age, and rather resembled badly stitched leather bags than anything else. Everything that could fall from them—hair, horns, hoofs—had already fallen, and handfuls of the straw stuffing bulged out from every seam. After passing the gateway the road zigzags upwards again, protected by a rough breast-

work in which recent repairs and new loopholes were obvious every few yards. The latter were "splayed" on the inside, contrasting strongly with the older useless little slits which only allow a defender to fire straight in front of him. Higher up, beside some houses which are falling rapidly to pieces, was a new and well-built barrack store-room, in which thousands of pounds of powder, tons and tons of supplies, and tens of miles of matchlock fuse were found. Another hundred paces to the left brought one to the door of the most interesting series of rooms remaining in the jong. Darkened by the blocking up of their windows, one cellar-like low room leads into another—some little chapels, some living rooms, some store rooms. Out of these one came into a little court with a rotten wooden ladder and a loyal dirty grey watch-dog who exhibited more pluck than his flying masters had. At the top of the ladder a step to the left takes one into a small yard, one end of which is occupied by a little gompa or temple. Looking in from the sunlight one could just distinguish the great dull gold figure and smiling, placid countenance of the Master whose presentment no superstition or latitude can either deface or materially change. Whatever stage in art his devotees may have reached, the great teacher's own image remains the same from Japan to Java, and the gaudy "katags" or ceremonial scarves hide in Gyantse as severely simple a design as you may find at Kamakura or Mandalay. One large turquoise supplied the ever-present bump of wisdom on Gautama's forehead, but otherwise there was no decoration. But when one entered the luxury that had been denied to the central figure was seen to be lavished on the ornaments that strew the kyil-kor or altar shelves beneath



The main approach to the citadel of Gyantse. View inside the main gateway.

the Buddha. One great wrought-steel chorten with chased courses and turquoise and gold ornamentation stood out among a crowd of lesser ones of brass or

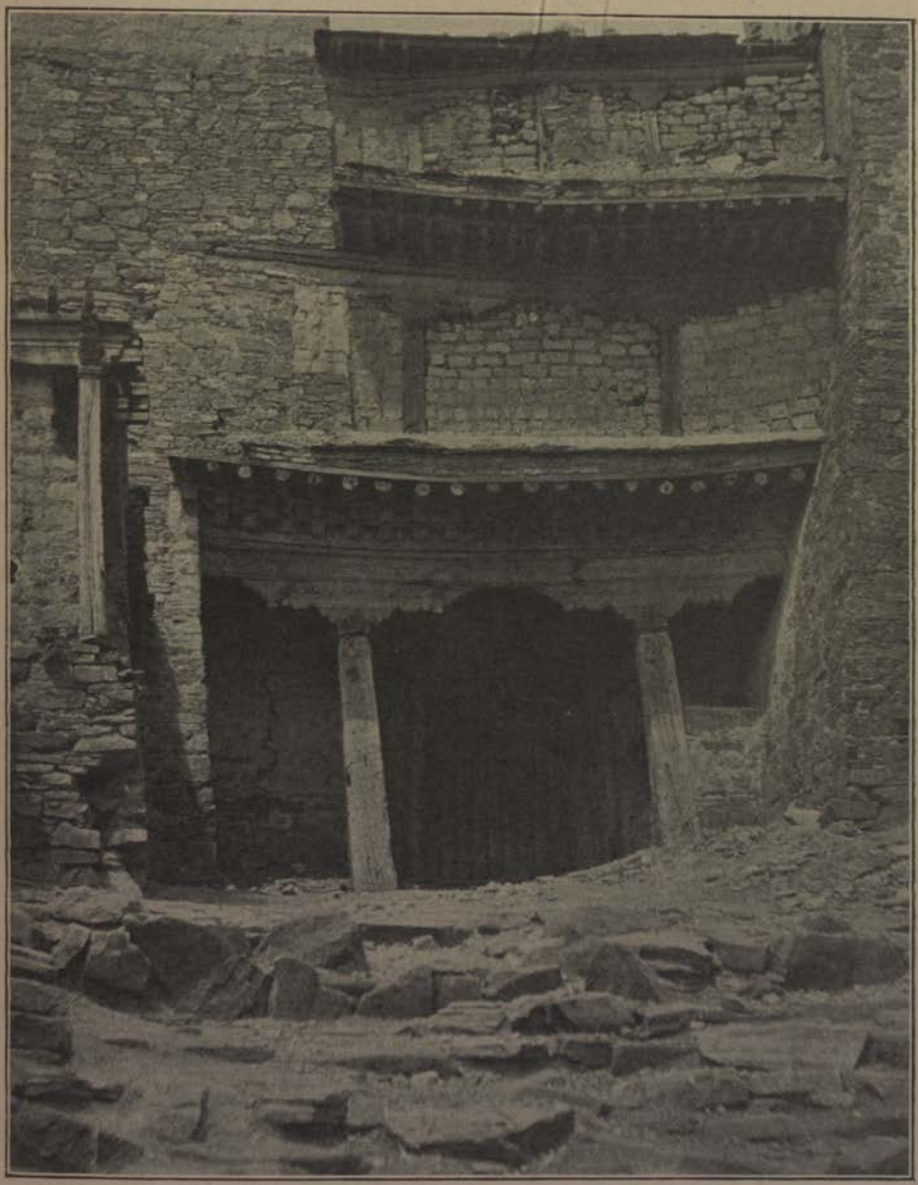
The altar of the little yellow gompa in Gyantse jong. There was a large turquoise set in the forehead of the central Buddha.

silver, antique ivories from India, vases with peacock feathers, and great brass and copper lamps. These lamps are perhaps the most striking ornament of a Buddhist shrine. Sometimes single, there may be

dozens and even hundreds, each composed of a wide and deep bowl of heaped-up butter, in which, floating in a little pool which its own warmth has made, burns a

The kyil-kor of the temple on the jong.

single wick with a small yellow flame. These are the last things that the priests will take away. If they fear looting, they will hide every other ornament, replacing them by strange, many-coloured erections of



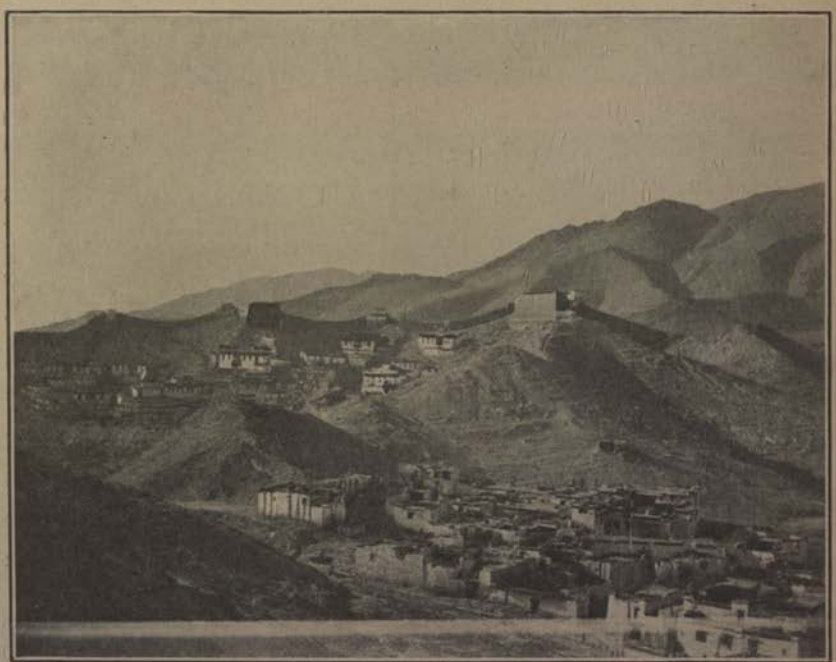
The inner gateway of Gyantse jong.

butter (*torma*), which they mould with extraordinary dexterity into conventional structures, sometimes five or six feet high. But the altar lamps must, and do, remain, whatever the risk, and one of the pleas subsequently brought forward by the Abbot of Gyantse was that a fine to be paid in butter might be commuted, as they needed all the butter they could get for ceremonial use on their hundred altars—and they urged, with shrewd flattery, it was well known that the British never interfered with the religion of the countries into which they made their way.

Outside this little orange-walled gompa were five pots in which bloomed courageously well-grown plants of simple English stocks. It was a curious shock to see them. How they came there it would be useless to guess, but surely never before did stocks justify so well Maeterlinck's eulogy of those little flowers that "sing among ruined walls and cover with light the grieving stones." For up above the gompa rise the great towers and buildings which lead up to the topmost structure on the very edge of the precipice which confronts the Lamasery to the north-west ; and even then, before the bombardments and explosions of later days, they were all roofless shells of stone which quivered in the light afternoon wind.

From the castle a fine view is to be had of the town of Gyantse and the great Lamasery of Palkhor choide, which stretches on the slope of a southerly spur facing the jong three-quarters of a mile away, protected by a long crimson wall from the assaults of the prevailing north-west wind. There are two curious things about this monastery. First, although it is subject to Lhasa, and therefore nominally a Gelukpa or Yellow Cap foun-

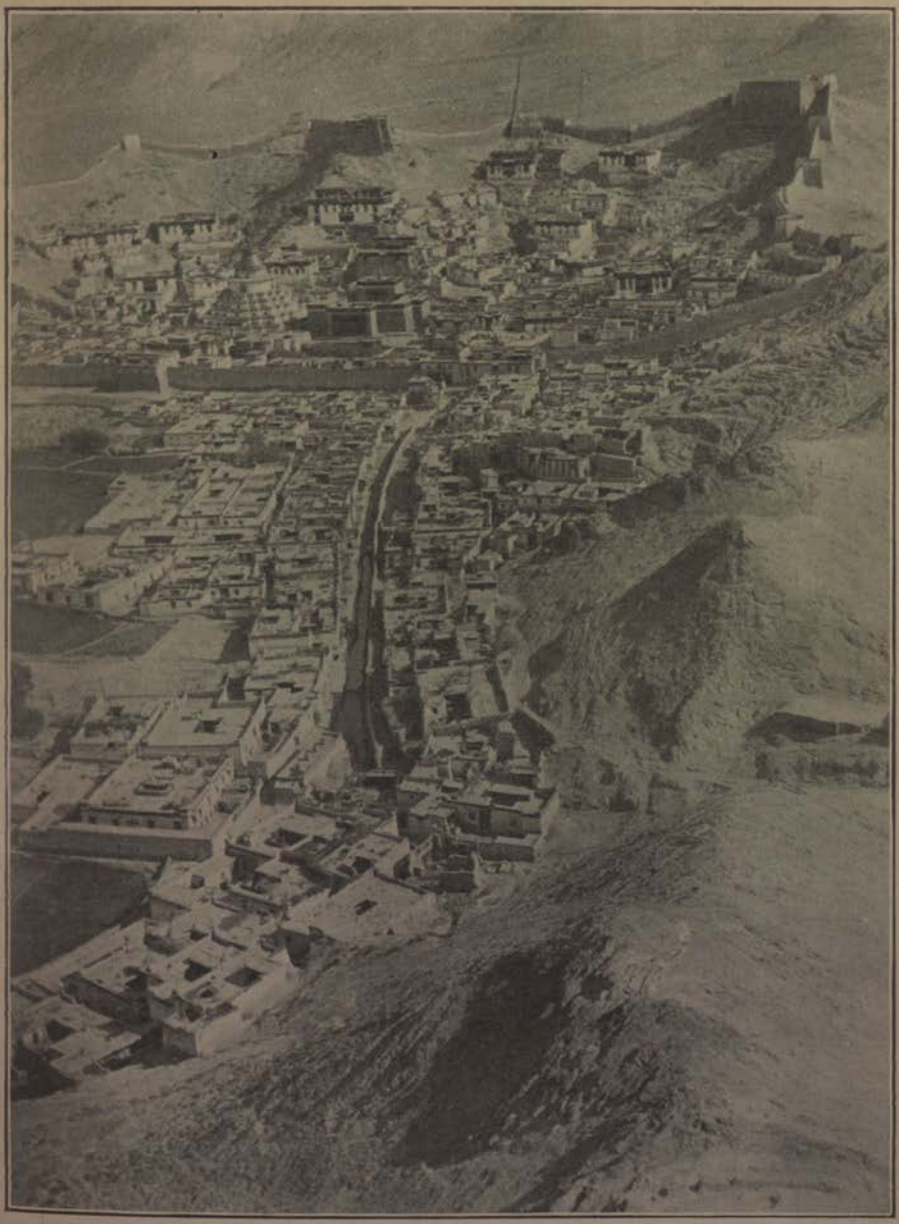
dation, it contains representatives of nearly all the recognised sects in Lamaism, which are numerous and jealous, though not vitally opposed to each other in doctrine. A curious custom, however, is, that when the Nying-mas or Red Cap communities in Palkhor choide worship with the Gelukpas the former make the



The eastern part of the town of Gyantse.

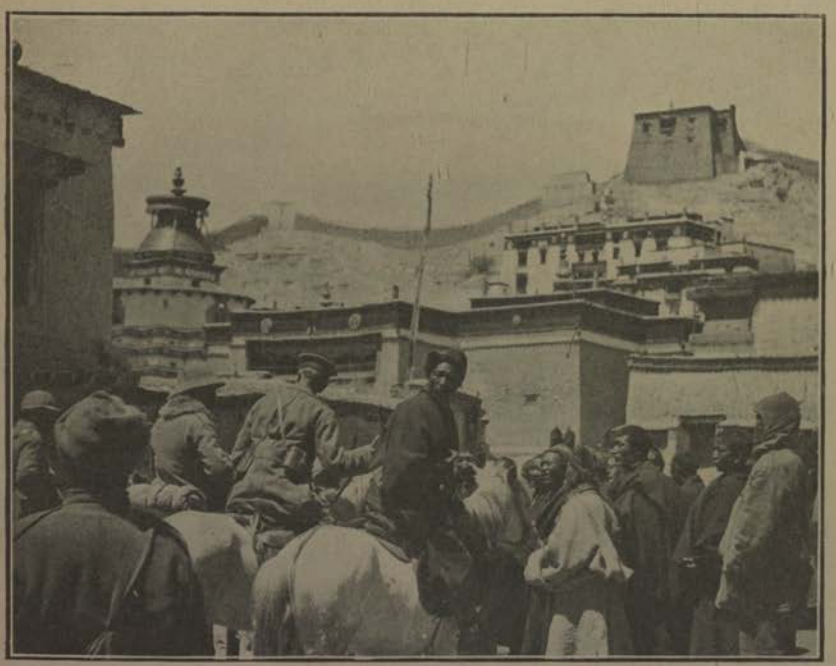
not inconsiderable concession of wearing the yellow cap instead of their own distinctive red one.

The other point, which is perhaps of little interest, is the legend that the great chorten or caitya outside the central temple was copied from the well-known temple of Buddh-Gaya long before the restorer's hand had obscured some of the characteristic features of the latter. This legend is, as a matter of fact, wholly untrue. There



A bird's eye view of Gyantse from the top of the citadel of the jong. The main street is divided by a long "mendang." The Palkhor choide enclosed in its wall fills the upper end of the picture.

is hardly any similarity between the two buildings. Chandra Das calls the architecture of the Gyantse building unique. In a way this is true, but the lower part represents fairly well on a minute scale—the whole base is only 120 feet each way—the great vihara of

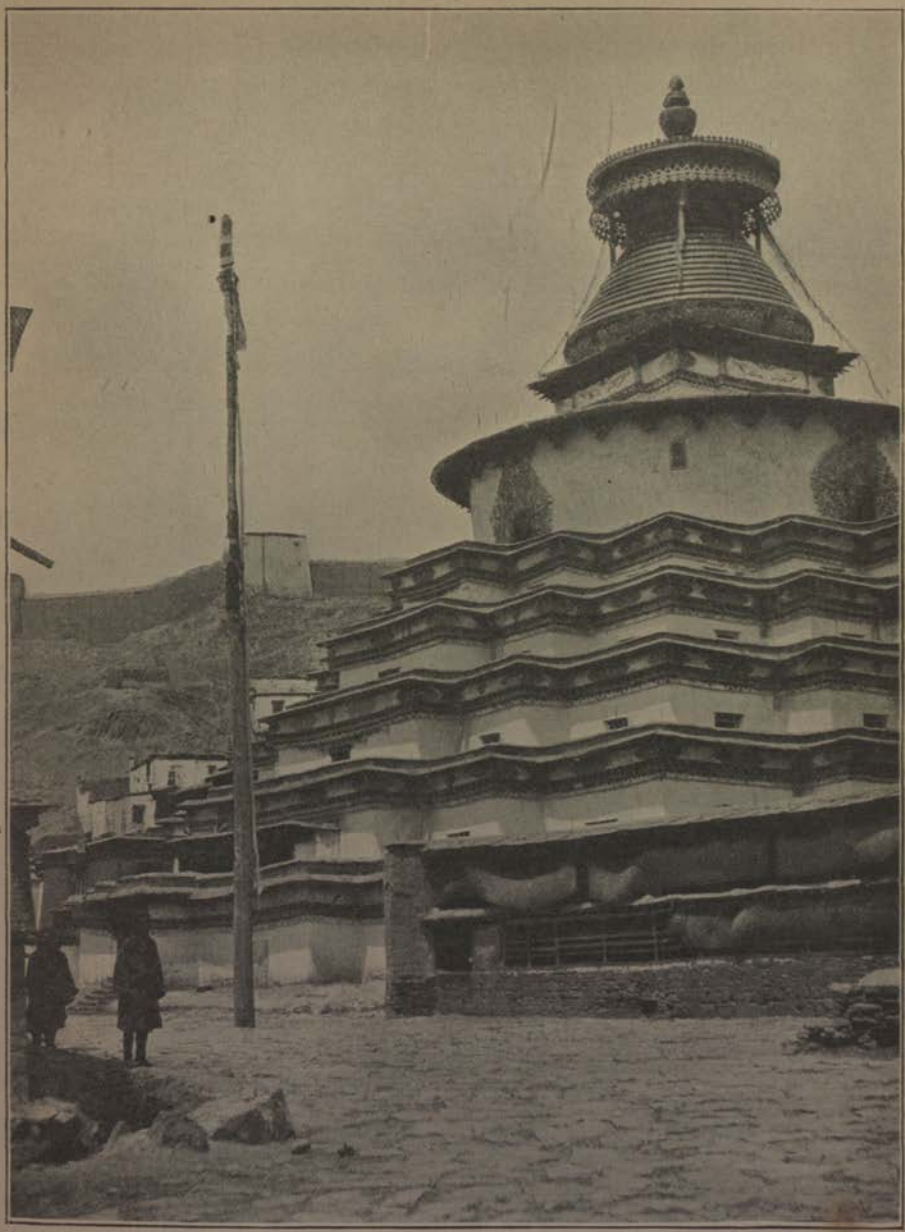


Inside the Palkhor choide (Monastery of Gyantse).
Capt. O'Connor is assuring the monks that so long as they do not interfere in military affairs they and their temples will be safeguarded.

Boro-Bodoer in the middle of Java. There is the same number of balustraded terraces, and the sides of each contracting stage are broken by square projections in a similar way. The photograph on page 211 will show the plan of each successive storey. Each projection or angle contains a small chapel. The upper part of the structure consists of a large white drum with four

grotesquely-ornamented doorways of a Burmese type, and a thirteen-ringed cone surmounted by a "htee" and finial, decorated with leaf-clapper bells, is also suggestive of Burma. The upper part is thickly ornamented with gold leaf, and the gilt copper plates composing the rings are each decorated with two incised figures of Buddha. The lower part of this pagoda—which is generally white—is roughly decorated here and there with colour in an effective way, and the interior walls and passages are painted with microscopic finish, in some medium that produces an enamel-like surface.

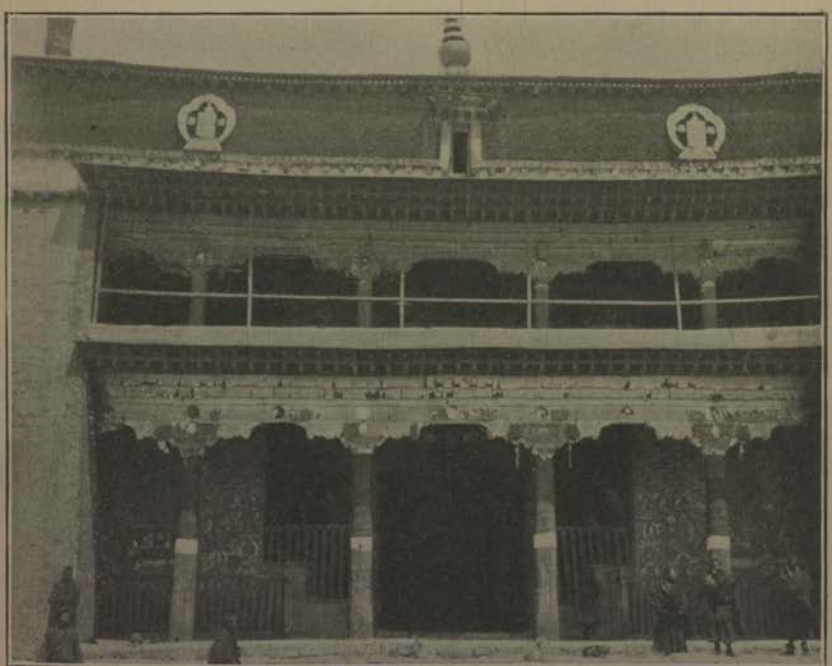
As one leaves the chorten and enters the main temple, an exquisitely painted "Wheel of Life" (if we may accept the rough translation which Rudyard Kipling borrowed for "Kim" from Waddell) meets the eye to the left of the doorway leading from the vestibule to the central apartment. It is difficult to convey any idea of the minute finish of this piece of work. A few will realise it when I say that it is probably the only product of man's brush which rivals the "Book of Kells" or the "Lindisfarne Gospels." Up in the balcony above there is exquisite work, but upon this circle the artist has lavished an obvious affection and care which must be seen to be believed. In style it resembles 13th century illumination, but, for example, no Vision of Hell was ever drawn with such amazing delicacy and hideous ingenuity as are the quaint tortures of the damned in this representation of the Buddhist Sheol. Inside the central crimson-pillared hall the only conspicuous object is the great seated figure of Maitreya, the next Buddha to be re-incarnated. He is, as always, seated in European fashion, a tradition which is more suggestive than most



The great chorten at the Palkhor choide.

modern Buddhist legends, and instinctively recalls the belief of Lamaism that the end of the present age will be marked by the surrender of Buddhism into the hands of the " Piling " or western foreigner.

In a recess of each of three sides of the central hall are great seated images of the Buddha. Sakya-muni



Main entrance to the Palkhor choide temple.

himself is surrounded in the dark northern chapel by half-seen gigantic standing statues of Egyptian massiveness and simplicity, almost touching each other as they line the walls, and looming out of the obscurity with dignity and no small dramatic effect.* To the left of the vestibule is an odd chamber of horrors. It is

* A similar arrangement is to be seen in the sanctuary of the "Jo" in the cathedral of Lhasa.

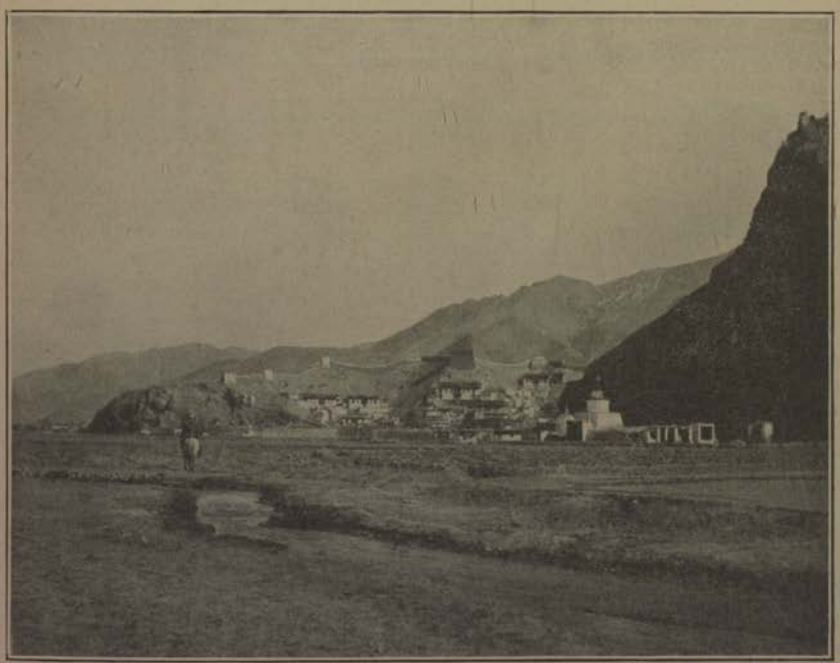
reported to be sufficient to overawe the most insubordinate of lamas, but the decaying stuffed beasts that hung from the roof and the dingy demons painted on the walls were scarcely as horrible as the common blue and scarlet guardians of religion who protect the entrance to every gompa. A dragon's skin was pointed

The Lha-kang of the Palkhor choide.

out to me. It was, perhaps, no bad imitation. Allowing for contraction, the python which once owned this covering must have been at least 25 feet long and 13 inches in diameter. Chain-armour, bows, quivers, flags, painted cloth, skins, a few old guns and spears, and a few little untidy altars, from which, as from every other shrine we visited in the Lamasery, every ornament, except the lamps, had been taken and hidden away in

A wall painting in Palkhor choide. The flowers in the begging bowl are an artist's license. Thari-putra and Mâdgalyana stand on either side of the Master. This oil fresco is typical of acres of similar art work on the walls of Tibetan gompas.

terror, and, of course, dirt everywhere completed the furniture of this dismal chamber. But there remained many more temples and apartments, from the inspection of few of which we were excused by the talkative and, apparently, perfectly friendly lamas. After drinking tea with the Abbot under the somewhat oppressive chaperon-



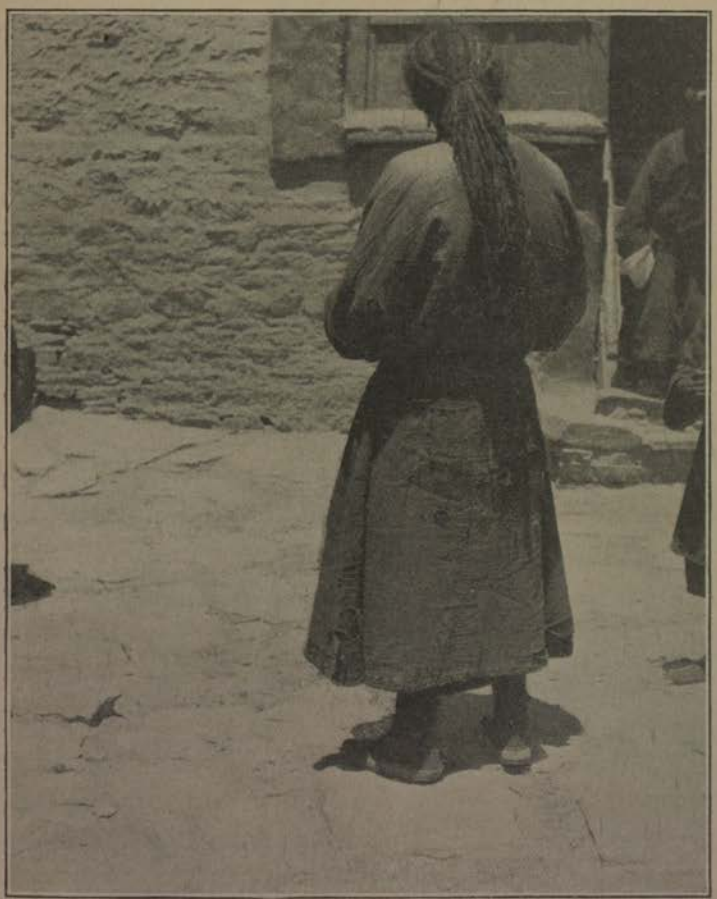
Palkhor choide seen round the corner of the rock on which the jong of Gyantse is built.

age of four Sikhs armed to the teeth, we left the monastery with many expressions of goodwill.

This was the first of many excursions to places of interest in the neighbourhood. The strangest visit we ever paid was that to the Buried Monks. One day O'Connor and I rode out down the valley about twelve miles to a small village in the cleft of the mountains

almost opposite Dongtse; we took with us the Shebdung Lama. Nothing could have been more peaceful and rustic than the long stretches of the plain dotted here and there with little figures engaged on their farm work. We stopped once to examine more closely the elaborate head-dress of a couple of ploughing yaks, much to the pleasure and pride of the clear-eyed boy who was their driver. Everywhere the villagers were pleased enough to see us; the first prickle of green was rising from the brown squares of irrigated mud, and some of the trees were timidly putting out the purple that precedes the green of spring. The nights were still cold, though the heat in the middle of the day was excessive, and the hot dry wind that scoured the valley every afternoon still burnt up the vegetation on the hill-sides and in other places where no artificial moisture could supply sap for the young foliage. We took the road on the right bank, not crossing over the bridge at Tse-chen; this road keeps a constant level following the curves of the mountain-sides ten feet above the valley flats. There was little enough to mark the journey down. Carelessly enough we ambled along with our two Mounted Infantry men, whom we had taken out of deference to Colonel Brander's wishes, rather than from any real belief that then or thenceforward we should be in actual need of them. Nothing could have been more peaceful and promising than the affairs of Gyantse at that moment; we had come through the town and—an unquestioned proof of our popularity—the beggars had become both familiar and insolent. It was a bright day and we had our luncheon with us. The good people of the valley were always willing enough to give us hospitality to the best of their ability, but

after all it was as well to have a couple of sandwiches and a boiled egg. About twelve o'clock we paused opposite Dongtse, lying out sleepily in the sun with



A monk of Nyen-dé-kyi-buk with long hair.

the great three-decker palace of the Pala family anchored in the trees below. Very soon after this we rode through a little hamlet with some name like Chi-lang. A sharp turn round a projecting spur brought us face to face with the little valley in which the monastery of Nyen-

dé-kyi-buk hides itself. The ascent was easy between bushes of thorn and roses covered with a wealth of traveller's joy; we passed beside the usual chortens and through a gateway over which a peach-tree spangled the blue of the sky with pink and snow. There was another blossoming against the walls of the monastery half-way up the hill. A hundred yards further on we found the abbot and the "chanzi"* of the community waiting to receive us.

The Shebdung Lama, who had lived for many years across the valley, and must often have seen from his master's windows above the town and gompa the rock-clinging monastery to which we had come, was really responsible for our visit. With the usual inability to recognise the things which really interest a traveller in a strange country he had, while insisting upon the interests and the beauty of the Sinchen Lama's home, only incidentally spoken of a small community across the valley where, he said, extreme self-mortification was practised by a small company of the Nying-ma sect. We left our ponies in the monk's care and went inside the temple. We were glad to escape the white and dazzling sunshine. There was instantly visible a curious distinction between the monks of Nyen-dé-kyi-buk and those whom we had met elsewhere. With the exception of the officials of the monastery these recluses wear their hair long, not plaited into a pigtail, but allowed to fall almost loose over their shoulders in a matted and filthy tangle. But besides this, there was not very much to distinguish the lamasery from others in the valley. The abbot, a quiet, sad-eyed man of about forty, was shaven, as also were a dozen children playing about with wholesome bickerings

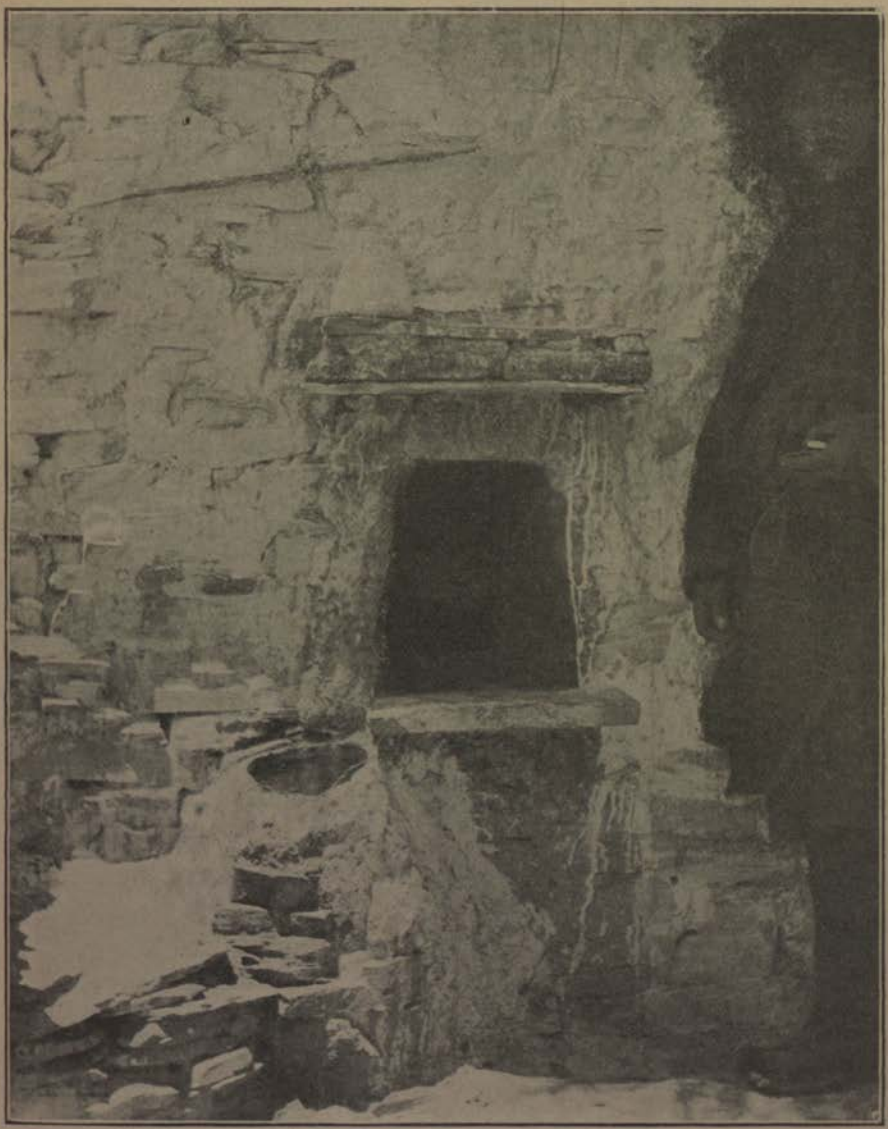
* A chanzi is a steward or bailiff.

in the dust of the courtyard opposite the great doorway of the temple. All were dressed in the usual sacred maroon, and they seemed cheerful and contented. Inside the chapel of the monastery, however, there was certainly an austerity which we had not seen elsewhere. This Du-kang had few of the usual silk banners and hang-

The sanctuary at Nyen-dé-kyi-buk. The pigeon holes on either side are filled with books. A small lamp is burning on the table, and there are bowls of water on the shelves.

ings which contribute so much both to the colour and the darkness of an ordinary gompa. There were the usual cushions on the ground, but the rows of images and ceremonial ornaments which generally fill the sanctuary end of these chapels were replaced by precise rows of books, each lodged sedately in its own pigeon-hole. In the centre, in place of the usual *kyil-kor*, with its multi-

farious confusion of cups and bowls and lamps, there was a narrow shelf in front of a glazed recess. I think that there were on this shelf ten or twelve little brass bowls full of water, but there were no butter lamps. The sight of glass in Tibet always attracted attention; it was rare enough to see a piece a foot square; this glass was five times as large, and one wondered how it had escaped safely across the passes to this sequestered spot. Behind it a hard-featured Buddha scowled, a very different representation of the Master from that placid and kindly countenance which sanctifies him still to many not of his own creed. Under the abbot's guidance we visited the rooms opening out from the temple. There was nothing of great interest, nothing to distinguish it from twenty other gompas. We then had tea with our host, and afterwards we asked permission to see one of the immured monks. Without any hesitation the abbot led the way out into the sunshine, which lay sweltering over the spring-teeming spaces of the valley below, and venturesome little green plants were poking up under our feet between the crevices into the stone footway. We climbed about forty feet, and the abbot led us into a small courtyard which had blank walls all round it, over which a peach-tree reared its transparent pink and white against the sky. Almost on a level with the ground there was an opening closed with a flat stone from behind. In front of this window was a ledge eighteen inches in width, with two basins beside it, one at each end. The abbot was attended by an acolyte who, by his master's orders, tapped three times sharply on the stone slab; we stood in the little courtyard in the sun, and watched that wicket with cold apprehension. I think, on the whole, it was the



At Nyen-dé-kyi-buk. The stone wicket of one of the underground cells—open.

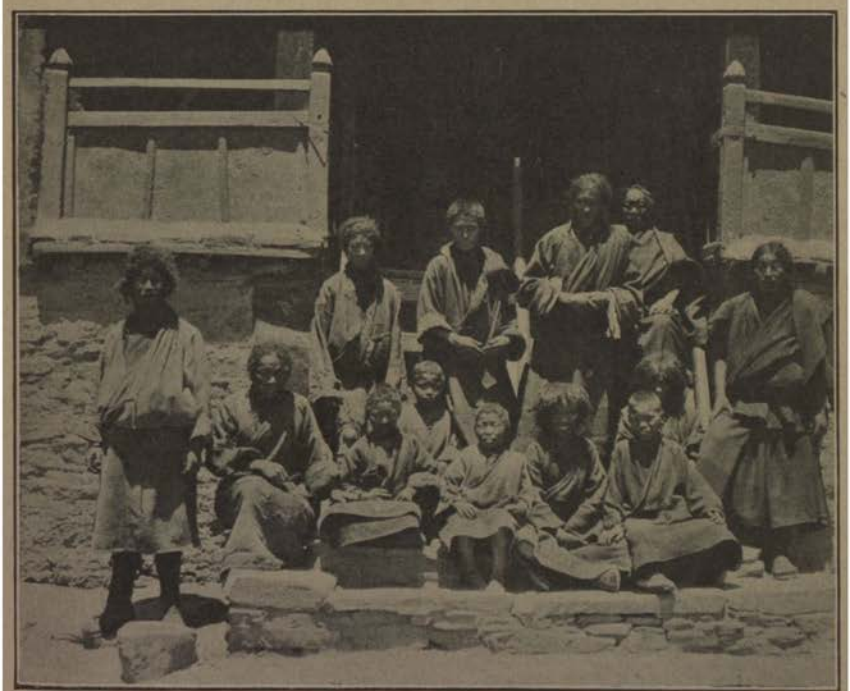
most uncanny thing I saw in all Tibet. What on earth was going to appear when that stone slab, which even then was beginning weakly to quiver, was pushed aside, the wildest conjecture could not suggest. After half a minute's pause the stone moved, or tried to move, but it came to rest again. Then very slowly and uncertainly it was pushed back and a black chasm was revealed. There was again a pause of thirty seconds, during which imagination ran riot, but I do not think that any other thing could have been as intensely pathetic as that which we actually saw. A hand, muffled in a tightly-wound piece of dirty cloth, for all the world like the stump of an arm, was painfully thrust up, and very weakly it felt along the slab. After a fruitless fumbling the hand slowly quivered back again into the darkness. A few moments later there was again one ineffectual effort, and then the stone slab moved noiselessly again across the opening. Once a day, water and an unleavened cake of flour is placed for the prisoner upon that slab, the signal is given and he may take it in. His diversion is over for the day, and in the darkness of his cell, where night and day, moon, sunset, and the dawn are all alike, he poor soul had thought that another day of his long penance was over.

I do not know what feelings were uppermost at that moment in the others, but I know that a physical chill struck through me to the marrow. The awful pathos of that painful movement struggled in me with an intense shame that we had intruded ourselves upon a private misery; and that we should have added one straw to the burden borne in the darkness by that unseen and unhappy man, was a curiously poignant regret.

We came away, and the abbot told us the story of the sect. "These men," said the abbot, when we questioned him, "live here in this mountain of their own free will; a few of them are allowed a little light whereby reading is possible, but these are the weaker brethren, the others live in darkness in a square cell partly hewn out of the sharp slope of the rock, partly built up, with the window just within reach of their upraised hand. There are three periods of this immurement. The first is endured for six months; the second, upon which a monk may enter at any time he pleases or not at all, is for three years and ninety-three days; the third and last period is for life. Only this morning," said the abbot, "a hermit died here after having lived in darkness for twenty-five years." The thing was almost more revolting because the men entered willingly upon it. "What happens when they are ill?" O'Connor asked the abbot. The answer came concisely enough, "They never are." It is true that when pressed he qualified this statement a little, but it seemed still to have considerable truth. He himself was waiting for the moment, now not long to be delayed, when he should bid his final farewell to the world.

Voluntary this self-immolation is said to be, and perhaps technically speaking it is possible for the pluckier souls to refuse to go on with this hideous and useless form of self-sacrifice, but the grip of the lamas is omnipotent, and practically none refuse. These hermits store up such merit—for themselves—by these means as no other life ensures. That may be some consolation for a Tibetan mind; it would be little enough for anyone else. On our return the children in the courtyard were invested with a terrible pathos. To

this life of painfully useless selfishness they are condemned, and the very difference in their coiffure is one more link which ties down their young lives. After their first immurement their hair is allowed to grow, and the sanctity which enhaloes a Nyen-dé-kyi-buk hermit



Waiting for immurement ; a group of lamas and children at Nyen-dé-kyi-buk. Those who have been immured for the shorter preliminary periods have long hair, others are shaven.

whenever recognised by his tresses, effectually prevents his turning back. He is a marked man, and, as in so many other cases in this world, he ends by doing what he is expected to do. Our horses were made ready and we said farewell to our kindly host and rode away into the warmth and life of the valley in silence.

This memory still makes a deeper impression than one

thought possible even in the first shock of the moment. Even now the silver and the flowers and the white linen and the crimson-shaded lights of a dinner table are sometimes dimmed by a picture of the same hand that one shook so warmly as one left the monastery, now weakly fumbling with swathed fingers for food along the slab of the prison in which the abbot now is sealed up for life : for he was going into the darkness very soon.

At Little Gobshi (one had to distinguish it from the better known Gobshi, seventeen miles away along the Lhasa road) there was, and now probably is again, the finest rug factory in Tibet. A large two-storied house with a courtyard was filled entirely with the weaving looms of both men and women workers. The patterns used are native Tibetan, and the colours are excellently blended and rich in themselves. It is difficult for them to make a piece of stuff wider than about thirty inches, because their looms are of a primitive description, scarcely more advanced than those of the Chumbi Valley, nor do they attempt to make a pattern larger than can be contained upon a single width. The plain orange and maroon rugs are made in narrow strips and sewn together to any desired width, but this is not done with the figured cloths. The difference in quality between one rug and another is often a matter of expert knowledge only. At first one is surprised and inclined to resent the great differences in the price of these rugs ; two will be shown you, one slightly softer in the pile, perhaps also slightly looser in design. You will get that for three rupees. The other one, crisper to the touch and, if you will look closely, far richer in colour, they will not sell you for less than twenty-five. But when the eye is once taught

to recognise the difference, the cheaper rugs are easily seen to be inferior from every point of view. They are, however, more than good enough for the London market, and this is one of the industries at Gyantse which might most profitably be developed. Even now if a big London firm were willing to place an order for five hundred rugs in Gobshi, that is to say, if it were to buy up practically the entire annual out-put of this first factory in Tibet, it could, while it held the monopoly, charge almost any price it liked to London buyers and obtain it. It is an experiment which is, perhaps, worth the attention of Farringdon Street Without. In those halcyon days at Gyantse I wrote to Lord Curzon in London and offered to act as commercial traveller for any firm which cared to make a trial of these really beautiful things, but long before an answer could be sent, times had changed and we were prisoners in Chang-lo.

The village of Gobshi which, like so many other villages in Tibet, is divided into two entirely distinct parts, separated by a waste of common-like land dotted with willow thorn, is not uninteresting. It lies comfortably among its trees, with a truant channel of the main river plashing lazily over hard pebbles within a few hundred yards. Overhanging it to the north is a very sharp conical rock, surmounted by an orange-coloured building, which attracts the eye from afar. This is the residence of the local magician. He only resides there during such part of the year as the young crops are in danger from damage by the weather. He then takes up his residence, and is ready at any moment with due incantations to deliver a charm against lightning or hail to a timid countryman. The charms

against hail are large circular sheets, adorned, not in the most delicate way, with figures of the four winds. These figures are represented bound and shackled, to signify the supernatural power exerted by the magician; pointing at them from the inscribed centre are the eight instruments of power. The *Dorje*, the bow and arrow, the sword, the double *purbu*, the flame-like knife, the sceptre, and one other thing that might be anything.

These magicians occupy a very curious position. They are all now sanctioned by the Gelukpa hierarchy, but this does not mean that they have always been obedient and loyal members of the orthodox church. As a matter of fact, many of them remain disciples of the *Beun-pa*, or aboriginal devil worshippers of the country. This sect is bitterly opposed in every way to the tenets of Buddhism, and it is only on this point that a truce has been proclaimed. The reason of this is clear enough. Successful in all other ways, the Yellow lamas have never been able wholly to transfer to themselves by the exercise of wizardry the deepest awe of the plain village peasants of Tibet. These men continued to pay their tribute of terror to the old autochthonous sorcerer, whose tradition and succession were undoubted. The authorities of Lhasa were shrewd enough to recognise the one case in which the invincible ignorance, which they deliberately foster in their flock, has turned to their own harm. They accepted and endorsed the magicians of the countryside *en bloc*, making no distinction of creed. By these means the sorcerer works hand in hand with the lamas of the district, and thereout, we may be sure, they both suck no small advantage. There is in Lhasa the head of all these magicians, but it is necessary at this moment to draw a sharp line of dis-

tinction between him, a responsible and revered reincarnation—whose authority is hardly less than that of the Dalai Lama, and whose position, though different, is scarcely less venerated—and these local magicians, whose scope is very different from his.

To a small degree every great gompa in Tibet trades upon the influence of occultism upon the Tibetan peasants. Charms and written *mantras* are by no means issued by the magicians alone. The *katags*, which lie sometimes in heaped-up confusion over the shoulders of the chief Buddha of a monastery, can afterwards be sold in fragments, and few relics are more potent. These little charms, to which reference has already been made, are worn round the neck, in what the Tibetans call a *gau-o*. These are little boxes, of silver as a rule, thickly set with turquoise, and suspended round the neck by necklaces of beads; in the case of the rich, they may be fronted with gold, but this metal is but rarely used for the rest of these trinkets. It is used in Tibet in a singularly pure state, and in the economical amounts with which the Tibetans are obliged to be satisfied, would not be strong enough. Men, especially when going on some dangerous expedition, carry much larger *gau-os* of copper, upon which the monogrammatic symbol of the great *mantra* is embossed by repoussé work. These also are always stuffed with relics and charms of different kinds; everything, it might almost be said, in Tibet that is capable of being stuffed is full of these little luck-bringing spells or charms. The biggest idols are packed with paper and silk charms, interspersed here and there with small brass images and occasionally silver ones. To this fact unfortunately the destruction of several of the larger idols—which were afterwards

"taboo" to the troops—was due at Gyantse. Lieutenant-Colonel Waddell gives, in his learned and careful work upon Lamaism, a large number of instances of the cases in which these charms are used, and the ritual employed.

One odd fact came under our notice. The charms issued from Lhasa to the Tibetan soldiers opposing our advance included protection against almost every known material used in war. After Guru, some of the wounded who were being tended by us were asked whether their faith were shaken or not; they, in some surprise, entirely repudiated the idea. "We did not know in Lhasa what metals we should guard ourselves against: lead and iron, and steel and copper, and silver, none of these could have hurt us; but we did not even know that there was a metal called nickel; therefore no charm was given us to protect us against your bullets." The unwinding of a grimy little silk-covered packet from the inside of a *gau-o* is rather an interesting occupation; the contents are cleaner than might be thought. One of the oddest things I found in any was a little pebble with the thumb imprint of the Dalai Lama upon it in vermilion. Unfortunately damp had blurred the lines.

The prayers printed on the prayer-flags of Tibet are generally identical in arrangement and, perhaps, also in the words of the prayer. In Gyantse I bought one of the wood-blocks, from which these flags are printed; it is a curious piece of careful and not ineffective wood engraving, it is about sixteen inches in length and twelve inches in width. This is about the largest size that is used; the flag, being attached to the mast perpendicularly, only allows a thin upright fringe to be printed,

and you will find fifteen or twenty repetitions of the same prayer, reaching one above another all the way up the mast. These "flying horses" (*lung-ta*) were probably mistaken by the traveller who originated the idea that the Tibetans sent horses to belated wayfarers by throwing to the winds pieces of paper with the figure of a horse printed upon it. It is quite possible that this may actually have been done, but continued enquiry on my part elicited no corroboration whatever.

To return to the country surrounding Gyantse. The monastery at Dongtse, twelve miles away towards Shigatse, the sacred residence of the Sinchen Lama, was visited by O'Connor, Wilton, and myself very soon after our arirval at Chang-lo.

The road to Dongtse serpentines across the wide level plain of the Nyang chu, idly acquiescing in the obstacles which villages, water-courses, field boundaries, chortens, houses, or irrigation ditches throw in its way. The patchwork of cultivated fields, some no larger than allotments, none more than an acre in area, reminds one of high farming in Berkshire, so jealously is every square foot made to serve the owners and grow its patch of barley. There are no trees, no hedges, not even a weed. The very dykes which restrain the irrigation channels are grudged from the rich, dry, grey loam, as fertile as the Darling Downs.

Agriculture is a serious business with the Tibetans. Here and there, but very rarely, the darkened garnet or dirty amber of a lama's dress adds a note of colour to the thirsty stretch of alluvial soil, fenceless and flat. But generally the work is done by quiet little figures, whose patched grey dresses are blotted out among their

own furrows and whose very existence is often betrayed only by the slow plod and turn of the scarlet and white head-dressed yaks in the plough-yoke. Among these people there is no shyness, scarcely even curiosity. The spring work has to be done, and there is no one but themselves to do it—perhaps the yaks can only be borrowed from friend Tsering up at the hamlet for this day; perhaps, too, the lamas will exact their corvée to-morrow. And there is much to do. Meanwhile these strange foreigners can wait to be inspected.

Always, of course, there was civility as we rode by. The Tibetan peasant's manners are perfect. The small boy jumps off the harrow upon which he has been having a ride, and, stopping his song, bows with his joined hands in front of his face, elbows up, and right knee bent. A householder smiles, exhibits two inches of tongue, and gives a Napoleonic salute as we pass by, pulling his cap down over his face to his chest. Rosy-backed and breasted sparrows fly in a twittering company before us through the grey-white sallowthorn brake, and a vivid golden wagtail flirts his tail beside a puddle. Redstarts sit on the top of prayer poles, and hoopoes flash black and white wings by the stream. Ruddy sheldrake and bar-headed geese barely move aside from a wet patch of recent plough-land as we approach, and iridescent black-green magpies, half as large again as our English luck-bringers, keep pace beside us with their dipping flight. The sun is hard and vivid, and the flat plain shivers a little in the heat, confusing the lines of leafless willows beside a whitewashed mill. There is promise of foliage, but no more. The houses are streaked perpendicularly with wide welts of Indian red and ash-grey, and long strings of many-coloured little

flags droop between their housetops and the nearest tree. Tibetan "mastiffs" bark from every roof until the housewife quiets them with a stone. She throws better than her European sister, in spite of a grimy coral and turquoise halo round her head and a baby on her left arm.

The story of the last Sinchen Lama is one which it is worth while to tell. He was the seventh in succession of one of the most important secondary reincarnations of Lamaism. His abode has always been at Dongtse, but his predecessors were buried with great ceremony each under a gilded chorten at Tashi-lhunpo, the metropolis of the province of Tsang. The last Sinchen Lama was the man who in 1882 received Sarat Chandra Das, and extended to him continual patronage and hospitality. In the narrative of his journey the famous spy refers to him repeatedly as "the minister." He was, as a matter of fact, minister of temporal affairs of the province of Tsang at this time and a most important man. On his way to his first interview with his patron Chandra Das passed in the market place of Tashi-lhunpo a party of prisoners loaded with chains, pinioned by wooden clogs, and in some cases blinded. It was an ugly omen of the end. To the Sinchen Lama's influence Chandra Das owed the facilities which enabled him eventually to make his way to Lhasa, and that he was not ungrateful is clear in every line in which he refers to his patron. The minister seems to have been in his way strangely like that enlightened Grand Lama of Tashi-lhunpo who received Bogle in 1774; he was anxious to improve his knowledge of the world, and especially of English affairs; he even attempted to learn our language, and he seems throughout to have been a broad-minded, intelligent and sym-

pathetic man. Chandra Das stayed with him for some time at Dongtse, on his way to Lhasa. A year or two after Chandra Das had returned to India the truth leaked out about his individuality. The Lhasan Government threw the entire blame upon the carelessness of the authorities in the province of Tsang. Upon the Sinchen Lama they visited their anger in a fearful manner. His servants were taken—all except one—they were beaten, their hands and feet were cut off, their eyes were gouged out, and they were left to die in the streets of Tashi-lhunpo. The Sinchen Lama was reserved for another fate. He was taken to Gong-kar, a fort on the right bank of the Tsang-po, a few miles below the confluence of the Kyi chu.

The rest of the story must be told, as it is believed by the common people, who had known and loved the Lama in his life. A message was received from Lhasa to the effect that the Sinchen Lama must commit suicide. This he quietly refused to do. He said, "I am indeed in your hands; you will do with me what seems good to you. But I will not kill myself, and if you kill me, you will incur for yourselves a terrible reincarnation." This answer produced another peremptory demand that the Lama should lay violent hands upon himself. To this the Lama made no reply at all. The days went on, and at last the authorities in Lhasa determined to take his life, though they still hoped that they might avoid the awful consequences to themselves of blood-guiltiness. A boat was taken, and innumerable holes of different sizes were bored in her. In this the Lama was placed, and he was sent spinning down the current of the great river. Thus he would be drowned, but to the ingenious minds of the hierarchy it seemed that the

responsibility lay perhaps with their victim, whose weight would have sunk the unseaworthy craft. Blood, at any rate, would not have been spilled. But the Lama was in no way dismayed; he raised a prayer, and fishes innumerable came; they intruded their blunt noses into the holes in the boat, and slowly propelled it safely to the shore. The Lama disembarked and walked quietly back to his prison. The news of this miracle produced but momentary consternation in Lhasa; the brute creation might indeed be at the orders of this holy man, but die he must; they must try another way. Therefore, almost immediately, another attempt was made; large rocks of granite were bound upon his back, and he was once more thrown into the river. But again they had reckoned unwisely. If the Sinchen Lama's life were to be taken, the sin of murder must accompany it. This was the eternal law, and as the sainted Lama's body touched the water, the rocks were turned into pumice stone, and his friendly fishes soon nuzzled him again to shore. Thereafter Lhasa grew desperate. They sent a wicked man, a Kashmiri Mohammedan, for whom the prospect of reincarnation as a louse had no terrors, and the Sinchen Lama's head was hacked from his body.*

Nor was this all. Having destroyed the body, the hierarchy at Lhasa proceeded to annihilate the soul. No further reincarnation of the Sinchen Lama has been recognised from that day. In the long gallery of reincarnated Bodisats who occupy the chief place of Lamaism there is one frame, as there is in the Venetian

* This is the native tale, and it is almost a pity to correct it in any particular. Another story is that the Sinchen Lama with his hands tied behind him was thrown into the river and never seen again.

ducal palace, blank and empty. This has been a very serious trouble to the good people of Dongtse, and they are apparently not without sympathisers at Lhasa. A few years after the murder of their loved Lama a child was admitted into the Ga-den monastery. He had been born immediately after the crime, and to the awe-struck amazement of the ruling lamas he exhibited the one final proof of Sinchen Lamaship. His left kneecap was absent. That child lives still, and in sullen determination the people of Dongtse are but waiting till their Lama shall be restored to them. Meanwhile Dongtse is in a parlous state. Its religious life has been broken into and a stranger imported from another province to rule over them. Down in the town below affairs are no better. The Pala family which reigned in the great palace underneath the hill is exiled and expropriated. A government chanzi, or bailiff, collects the rents and pays them over to the man who by auction obtained the beneficiary rights of the deposed family. At Dongtse it is said that those rents are paid over to a member of the family. Altogether the local bailiff seems to be in a difficult position, for the offence for which the Pala family was banished was merely that of having abetted the late Regent in retaining temporal power in his hands after the coming of age of the Dalai Lama. At any moment, therefore, the Pala family may be reinstated in their property with unpleasant powers of retaliation.

Our small party—one of us the only servant of the Sinchen Lama who had escaped death—reached Dongtse about noon, and immediately climbed the hill on which the monastery stands; we were received with the greatest friendliness by the abbot, and one or

two of the senior monks. The great temple was hardly as richly endowed with silver and jewelled ornaments as we had been told. It was curious to watch the Shebdung Lama as he wandered round the old familiar halls. For many years he had been an exile, and he had never believed that he would see the home of his loved master again, and as he put his forehead on the lip of the lotus throne, upon which the great Buddha of the place was seated, and so remained motionless for ten seconds, there must have passed through his mind something strangely like *Nunc dimittis Domine*. For this man's love for his murdered master after eighteen years is still as fresh to-day as when they lived at peace on this hillside of the Nyang chu Valley, and in all the time since, the Shebdung Lama's only happiness has been bound up with the memories of his life here. He could hardly speak as we entered the shrine, and was again visibly affected when we ascended to the actual rooms occupied by the Sinchen Lama.

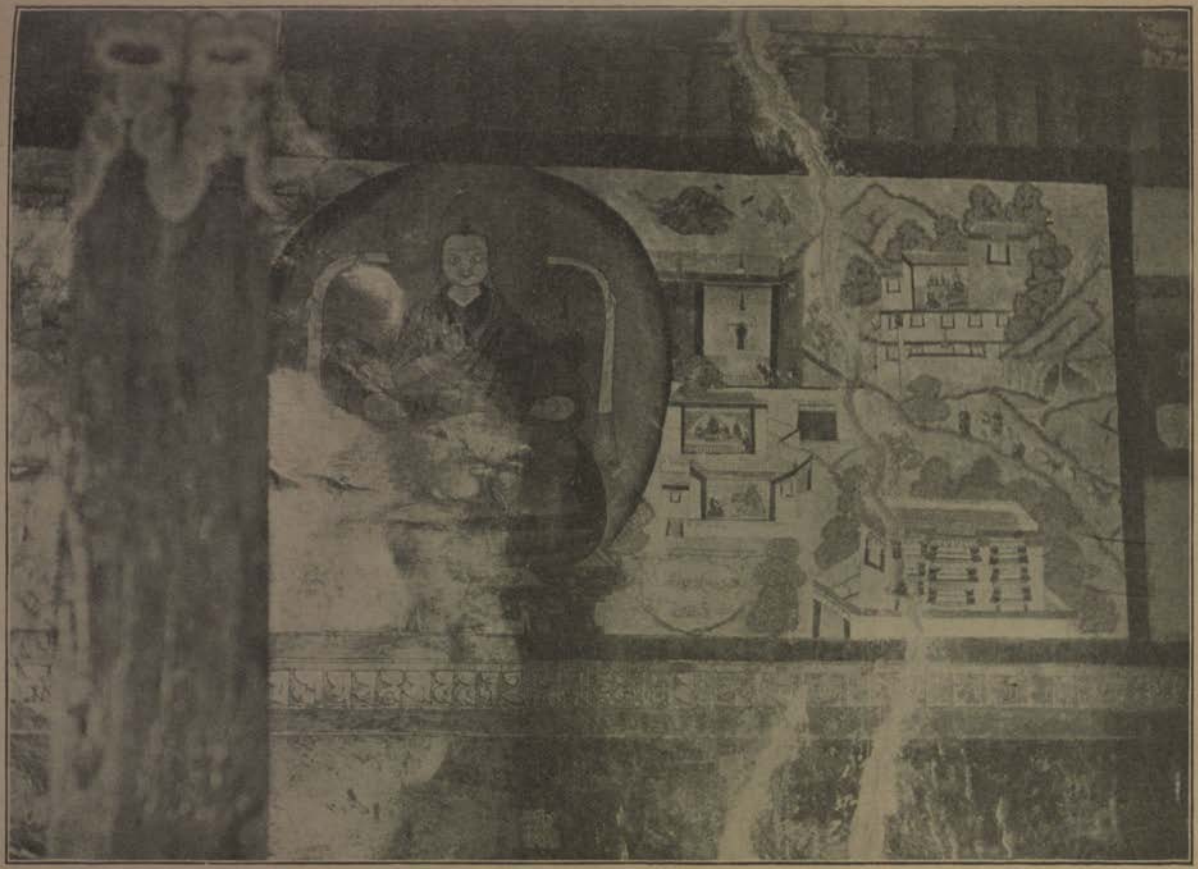
These consist of a set of well-painted chambers, opening out one from another. In the main room, still empty and forlorn, save for a table containing a hundred little brass bowls filled with water, there is one of the strangest things in Tibet. The Sinchen Lama, continuing the series of his ancestors painted round the wall, had also a record of his own life and ministry painted in a series of scenes by an artist. His own portraiture is encircled by these little pictures; the figure of the Lama is purely conventional, a mild-eyed, celestial face with a pursed up rosebud mouth—the picture which accompanies this chapter will sufficiently indicate the style in which the work is done. Round him there is a series of stiff little drawings not without some

strength, recording from his birth, passage by passage, the events of his momentous life. Now these were painted in the happy days before Chandra Das came.

At the end of this record there is the strange thing. There is in a corner the picture of a fortified house, and, above it, the picture of a man who has been thrown into a stream of water; these may be made out in the plate. But it will be noticed that there is no such appended written description as may be seen beneath other scenes depicted on the wall. The artist requested him to dictate the legend for these two pictures. The Lama refused; he said, "These two incidents shall remain undescribed; one day you will understand." We were assured there that the house painted on the wall bears a strong resemblance to Gong-kar jong; the meaning of the last scene is obvious enough. There the two pictures are, and in its main lines the story must be a true one, but it is difficult to explain.

Immediately beyond this series of pictures, is the most touching thing I have seen in the country. In sheer gratitude to the only companion of his lonely exaltation, far removed from the common friendship of men, the Sinchen Lama had had painted upon the wall his little shaggy-haired dog, feeding out of a blue and white china bowl. I do not know that anything in the record of this man could tell the story of his kindly sympathy and humanity so well as this ill-drawn little figure.

We spent an hour or two there, and had tea, both with the abbot of the monastery and with the occupants of the Pala palace in the town below; then we set off for home in the middle of the afternoon, facing south-east to where the high fort-crowned peak of Gyantse rose indistinctly, amid the daily driving dust-storm



The fresco on the wall of the Sinchen Lama's private apartments at Dongtse. The house of his imprisonment is to be seen in the right bottom corner, and above it is the river in which he was drowned.

which wrapped its base and indeed all the valley in a tawny fog.

Né-nyeng, or as it was invariably known Nai-ni, was another place which was afterwards to become of great interest and importance to us. Seven miles away to the south, just before the valley opened out from the gorges of the Nyang chu, it commanded our road to India, and was the scene two or three times of fighting between the Tibetans and ourselves. Né-nyeng lies in an amphitheatre of steep hills; looking at it from across the river the sight was typically Eastern, and might have been a theatre "back-cloth," painted with the deliberate intention of including every suggestion of the Orient; but he would have been a clever man who limned such a scene as this. All round this half-circle of converging spurs the plain hot rock glared at one. The line cut by its upper cornices against the sky was harsh and exact. The blue that descended into the ravines and arched the peaks was cloudless and whitened; on one conical hill, almost inaccessible, sat a square yellow block-house commanding the town from a height of a thousand feet. A little lower down, when the eye got used to the glare, another and stronger fort, built of the very rock on which it rested, could just be made out by the straightness of its lines. In the middle of this great recess the river flats stretched white and dusty, draining down by a slackening gradient from the clefts of the amphitheatre. Just where it gained its equilibrium, Né-nyeng rose in a garden of greenery. The square white houses blinked in the sun, the high unchecked line of the square building in the centre of the town, half monastery, half keep, showed up dustily

above the flat roofs of the houses, which cling to it for protection.

Between us and the town the sweeping river cuts its way, leaving perpendicular banks of pebbled banket purple in the shades and amber in the sun, for all the world like the mouldings of a clustered Gothic pillar. We had little to do with the inhabitants, except in an unpleasant manner. Now and again they fired upon our mail runners, and eventually the place had to be cleared when the relieving force was nearing Gyantse. There was in this monastery, if some of the reports are to be believed, a reincarnation in the form of a little girl, of about six years old. We never heard anything more about her; the story seems unlikely, because there was no nunnery in the place. The only monastery over which a woman presides in Tibet is that of Sam-ding, where the Phag-mo Dorje was reigning many centuries before the coming of the "new woman" in the West.

In this connection one thing was frankly admitted by the Tibetans. We were often surprised to find the monasteries stripped of their valuable and most precious ornaments upon our arrival. Without any hesitation the monks would admit that they had all been taken away and put in the nearest nunnery, because, they said, the English people do not attack women, and do not enter nunneries. It was a simple device and one that implied no small compliment.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIGHT AT THE KARO LA.

COLONEL YOUNGHUSBAND occupied Chang-lo on the 19th of April with a force of about four hundred and fifty men. He had also about fifty mounted infantry, two maxims, and two ancient seven-pounder field-pieces, now officially discarded, which, in their popular nicknames "Bubble and Squeak," were at once described and appraised. This force was amply sufficient to defend the place against any attack that the Tibetans could deliver. They, however, seemed in no way willing to test the defensibility of Chang-lo; and nothing could have been more peaceful than the reception of the British force, not at Gyantse only, but for a score of miles up and down the valley. It is true, that for our expeditions beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the post, two or three mounted infantry were always taken as an escort, but we imagined no danger, and nothing seemed less probable than that which actually occurred. I am quite certain that the events of the 5th of May were not less surprising—and a great deal more dismaying—to the good people of Gyantse than they were to ourselves. In the last chapter I have described one or two visits paid somewhat far afield in the Nyang chu valley, and it will be clear that nothing could have exceeded the hospitality,

and in most cases, the welcome which we received. At Gyantse itself, the friendliness of the inhabitants was almost excessive. We afterwards found that from the date of our expedition till the 4th of May, the servants of the Mission (who were unavoidably under less strict military surveillance than other followers) not infrequently spent the entire night within the town enjoying themselves among their Tibetan kin, with results on the following morning which were more natural than edifying. It need not be said that as soon as this was discovered the military authorities made a severe example of the chief offenders. Shopping in Gyantse was an almost daily amusement. The great Palkhor choide monastery was willingly opened to us by the abbot, and the members of the Mission looked forward to a pleasant two months' stay in one of the most interesting cities of Tibet, and a full enjoyment of the extraordinary opportunities which the undisguised friendliness of our neighbours promised.

More than this, Captain Walton, the surgeon and natural history expert attached to the Mission, had invited the Tibetans to make the fullest use of his own skill and the medical equipment of the Mission; and, as a result, he soon had as many cases as he could deal with. By preference, he selected cases requiring surgical treatment, and many unfortunate wretches disabled by cataract or disfigured by a particularly hideous form of hare-lip, which is common in Tibet, were relieved by him.

Everything was peaceful. There was not a cloud on the horizon. The dak ran through from the Chumbi Valley without interruption, day after day. The British intruders had given commissions freely in the

town, and the local artists were working overtime to execute orders for "tang-kas." Carpenters from Pala attended daily in the compound and worked from morn to night upon the furniture needed for the post. Their use of tools, by the way, which seemed in most cases to be of European origin, was extremely quick and certain, and the work which the adze was made to do would have surprised the British carpenter. Planes, saws, bradawls, and in rare cases, chisels, were also used; but nothing showed originality or suggested any device that might possibly be used to advantage at home except a little machine, simple, ingenious and compact, for marking a straight line upon wood by means of a thread loaded with black pigment.

Gardeners also were called in, and the courtyard in front of the Commissioner's tent was carefully dug up, divided into beds, and manured. There the seeds which the Mission had brought from home were hopefully planted, and beans, peas, cabbages, scarlet-runners, onions, and mustard-and-cress were sown with an almost religious care—in response to which, it must be confessed that only the last-mentioned vegetables produced any return. Still, the experiment was well worth making, and, incidentally, it had the effect of laying the dust in the compound—by no means a slight blessing. To tend this garden a worthy Tibetan lady, with her two husbands, was hired; and if her treatment of her brother-spouses was characteristic of Tibetan domesticity as a whole there is perhaps more to be said for this strange custom than a somewhat bigotedly monogamous nation like England could be expected at first sight to admit. "Mrs. Wiggs," as she at once came to be

known, was certainly the moving spirit in her own domestic circle, and the work that she got out of her pair of semi-imbecile husbands was quite extraordinary.

Outside the compound a bazaar was daily held, and over one hundred Tibetan men and women made it a daily practice to come with the small commodities of the place and spend a cheerful and, probably, not unlucrative morning in chaffering with the Sikhs and Gurkhas of the garrison. The afternoon weather, but for clouds of dust that blew eastwards from Dongtse was perfect; and though the trees were long in showing the first sign of spring, the lot of the Mission seemed cast in a fair ground indeed.

While everything round us was pointing towards peace and goodwill, the action of Colonel Brander in clearing the Karo la Pass needs some explanation. A week after our arrival the rumour came from a trustworthy source that the Tibetans were fortifying this pass; but as we had never deceived ourselves into believing that our presence in the country was even acquiesced in at Lhasa, the news was neither surprising nor disquieting. The pass, or rather the actual position across which the wall was being built, was over forty-five miles from Gyantse, and at the moment it lay somewhat outside the sphere of our immediate interest. Round us at Gyantse, there was, as I have said, every indication of perfect tranquillity, and even welcome. All up and down the valley agricultural work had been resumed, and there is no doubt that somewhere about this time the men of Shigatse definitely refused to obey the orders of the Dalai Lama to take the field again against us. Another matter which made it even almost impossible that there should be any immediate

friction was the fact that the Amban himself had received, and was still considering, an invitation to negotiate at Gyantse.

Matters, however, seemed somewhat affected by news which came in by a special despatch rider on May 1st—that a reconnoitering party of ours, with a mounted escort of fifty men, had been fired upon two days previously from the Tibetan fortification. The affair in itself was not perhaps of the highest importance. Our own intentions were entirely peaceful, and we had found no unfriendliness at any point on the journey to the Karo la. We sustained no casualties, though the sudden heart failure of one of the Sikhs at the unaccustomed altitude was naturally hailed by the jeering Tibetans as proof of the skill of their marksmen. We made no reply except two or three shots to keep down the enemy's fire while we retired; we inflicted no casualties.* But, though unimportant in itself, this encounter was not without its significance. In the first place, it put an end finally to any hope of the Amban coming to negotiate at Gyantse, and, though this refusal was not unexpected, the disinclination of Lhasa to take any steps whatever to open up amicable relations with us was hereby exhibited in a somewhat unmistakable manner. Nor was this all. From the Karo la towards Gyantse, ten or twelve miles of an easy route brings one to Ra-lung. At Ra-lung there is a division of the way, the main road running thence westerly to Gyantse and ultimately to Shigatse. It is, in fact, part of the main thoroughfare between the two capitals of Tibet. From Ra-lung another road

* Of this, however, I am uncertain. It was afterwards said in Lhasa that two were killed.

runs due south-west through Nyeru to Kang-ma, and upon this road we had no post. It was at once obvious that the defenders of the wall on the Karo la might, entirely unknown to us, move in two days upon our line of communication to the south and cause us serious inconvenience by the re-occupation of Kang-ma. The position therefore, was, that while we had no fear of the least unfriendliness in the Nyaṇg chu Valley, Lhasa was obviously preparing to withstand us by force of arms, and might at any time compel us seriously to weaken the little garrison at Gyantse in order to relieve the post at Kang-ma, and re-obtain control of our communications.

There was, however, an understanding with Lhasa that, until negotiations at Gyantse were shown to be impossible, we should not move further along the route to the capital. The detachment of a force sufficient to clear the Karo la would, moreover, cripple the garrison at Chang-lo ; nor could we possibly hold the pass, although we might without great loss secure it for the moment. On the one hand it might be argued that our prestige, as well as our line of communications, was in danger, and that the presence of a large and well-armed body of Tibetans holding the best strategical position between Gyantse and Lhasa might speedily undermine the existing friendliness of our neighbours. On the other hand there is no doubt that popular opinion in England would have been seriously affected by the news that we had again assumed the offensive unless, of course, the necessity were overwhelming.

Such was the situation with which Colonel Younghusband had to deal when Colonel Brander, commanding the post, laid before him an urgent request that he

Gobshi.

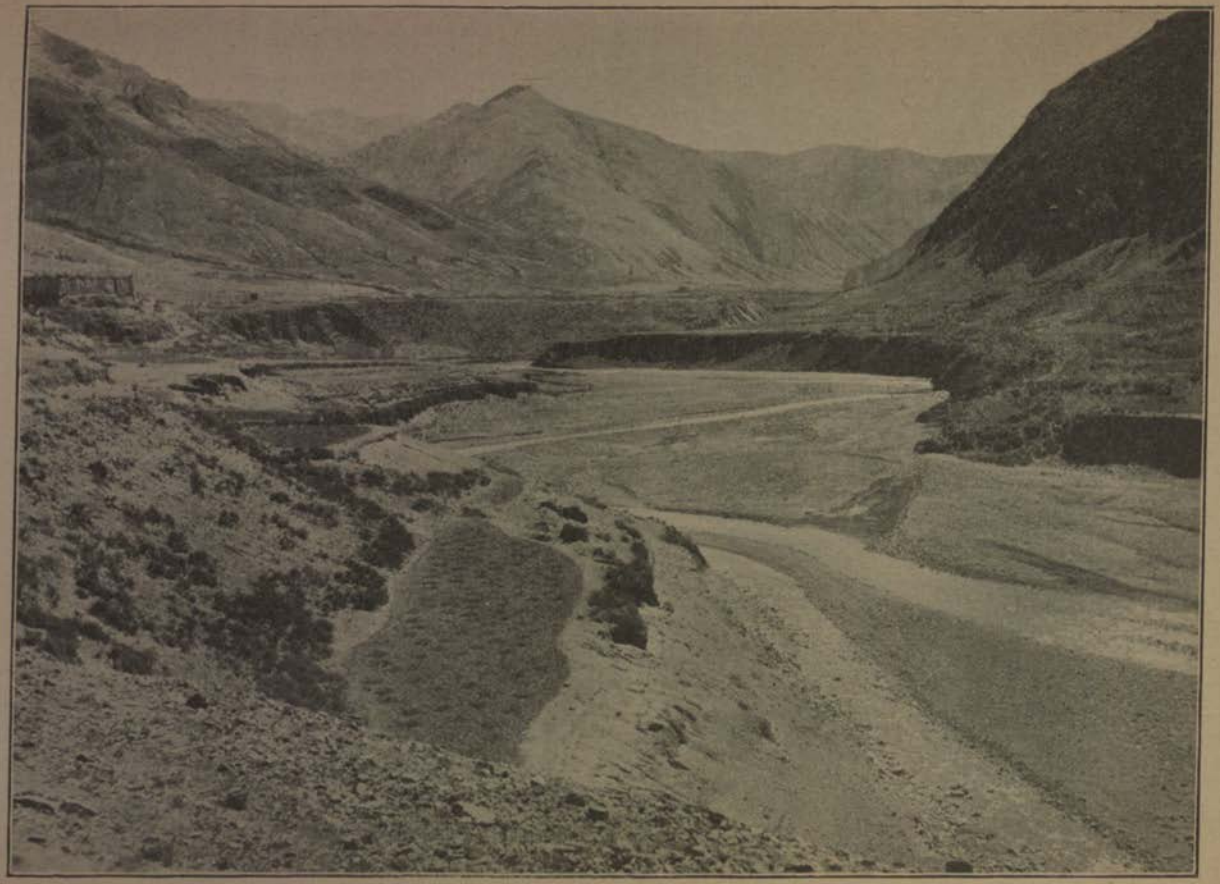
THIS IS A CHARACTERISTIC SCENE ON THE ROAD FROM GYANTSE TO LHASA. GOBSHI IS THE WHITE VILLAGE IN THE DISTANCE. *Rufous ochre, stream brown, hard blue sky.*

would sanction the immediate dispersal of the fifteen hundred Tibetans who had been located at the Karo la. One of the difficulties which every expedition subject to a twin control must experience is the natural reluctance of the political authorities to interfere in the slightest degree with the operations of their responsible military escort. Colonel Younghusband appreciated to the full the pros and cons of this proposal, and, in giving his unreserved assent to Colonel Brander's suggestion, he was no doubt influenced by the conviction that all chance of negotiation at Gyantse was not only at an end, but had never really existed. At all costs the Tibetans must be made to respect our strength, and against such an enemy as we had before us, the effect of a successful blow might at any time turn the scales and convince them that further active opposition to our policy was a mere act of folly. Colonel Younghusband therefore consented, and accordingly, on the 3rd of May, Colonel Brander, with two companies of the 32nd Pioneers, one company of Gurkhas, two maxims, and almost the entire force of mounted infantry, moved out to Gobshi, seventeen miles on the road to the Karo la. As they set forth news arrived that Tibetan troops were moving up the Nyang chu Valley to occupy Dongtse, a post which, it will be remembered, lies twelve miles west of Gyantse. Almost at the same moment a despatch was received from the Amban, saying that the Dalai Lama had definitely refused either to satisfy his demand for transport, or to answer his request that a properly qualified Tibetan should be empowered to deal with the questions in dispute between the British and himself.

Colonel Brander moved rapidly on. At Gobshi he

found the headman of the village seriously disquieted, and, though he had no difficulty in obtaining what he wanted, the wretched villagers clearly realised their position between the devil and the deep sea. Gobshi itself is a picturesque village with an untenable jong, perched upon a tooth of rock half a mile from the Chinese post-house which had attracted to it the little community of the "Four Gates." As a matter of fact, if ever a village deserved the name of "*Three* Gates" it is Gobshi, for there, hopelessly shut in by mountain spurs and heights almost precipitous, three roads, from Gyantse, Nyeru and Ra-lung respectively, meet abruptly. Here the Ra-lung chu joins the Nyeru chu, and shortly below "waters meet" the little town sits precariously on the edge of the river cliff, at the end of a wide alluvial terrace, a mile in length, which presents, perhaps, the best instance of successful cultivation that one can see from the road for eighteen miles. From this place until it descends steeply into the valley of the Tsang-po, cereal crops will not ripen, though here and there they can be used for fodder. After a hasty inspection of the Chinese rest-house it was unanimously decided to make no use of its grimy and obviously populous accommodation.

On the next day Colonel Brander moved on up the right bank of the Ra-lung chu. Threading his way over the two bridges just above the confluence of the rivers, he came in two miles through the gorge and out into the easier road which makes its way through the poor fields of the Ra-lung Valley. The first place one passes is the Khamo monastery, a strange community, in which the monks and nuns live a common life together—a thing permitted by the Dalai Lama,



The Ra-lung chu Valley.

and one that causes no great scandal even among the strictest disciples of Lamaism, though it is regarded as a concession to the weaker brethren. This part of Tibet has a Red Cap colony, and the ash-gray, white and Indian-red perpendicular stripes that characterise the buildings of this community form for miles a peculiarity in the landscape and strikingly relieve its monotony.

Of that monotony, the dead sameness of mountain tracks across the top of the world, it is hard to give any idea. The blue sky, of a clearness and depth of colour that no less altitude can give, vaults over the slippery hill-sides between which the thin stream cataracts or spreads itself in runlets across a waste of sand. There is no verdure at that time of the year except that which is artificially grown on the river-flats where the valley is wide enough. Rich umber and light red, seamed and filmed with gray purples of the clefts; bald ochre of spurs that thrust the water from their feet; bare red of whip-like willows growing over a mud wall; coarse grit-coloured road, here grayish with slate, here dun with granite, there again rufous with a floor of limestone—these are all the colours except here and there, when one meets a hurrying lama, wrapped in his habit of dull maroon. As the sun sets the richer pigments, beaten all day by his rays into the hot hill-sides, are cooled out of the rocks; and as the sunlight is slowly lost in the valleys below a faint orange gauze spreads and reddens into carmine on the far snowy peaks to the north-east.

One side of the river is like the other; you may cross it anywhere and find the same view, the same road. Perhaps Long-ma, well-placed upon a bluff over-

looking an alluvial flat where stunted barley grows, is the most interesting town on the route; and the village itself, though quite as dirty as every other in Tibet, has, at any rate in the distance, a certain dignity of its own, to which, in a rather specious way, the buildings set up on the rapidly ascending slope behind the main path of the town contribute. There is a large house here which was unoccupied and shut up on our arrival, and interested us chiefly because it was said to have recently contained a community of Lamaic acolytes. From Long-ma to Ra-lung the road is comparatively uninteresting. Here and there, in the distance, filling the end of the valley, one saw the great white mass of Nichi-kang-sang; here and there steep jutting pinnacles of red rock; here and there across the river the remains of a house crumbling on the alluvial ledge. The river itself runs entirely round the stone buttresses of the fields, and over the waste of uncultivated ground a few patches of vetch—at that time without even a promise of flower—a few stunted thistles, and the inevitable gray brushes of wormwood star the dun naked slopes. Nothing is more striking up here than the way in which the dark blue of the sky overhead shades quickly down towards the horizon on every side into the palest shade of turquoise. The clearness of the air is such that not the faintest screen of blue is interposed between oneself and the hills four miles away; while the clefts in the glaciers of Nichi-kang-sang himself seem as clearly defined at a range of fifteen miles as those which criss-cross upon the gravel of the further bank.

Ra-lung was reached on the afternoon of the second day. This march of thirty-three miles in forty-eight

hours at this altitude was, perhaps, the most creditable feat of endurance of the whole campaign. Such distances as these may not seem of any particular military interest, or of credit to the troops concerned, but it must be remembered that the lowest estimate that one can fairly place upon the additional labour of march-

Nearing Ra-lung in the valley of the Ra-lung chu.

ing at these high altitudes is a hundred per cent. It is true that the actual fatigue to the muscles is hardly increased, and that though men may arrive in camp almost dead-beat, an hour or two's rest (if they are lucky enough to get it) will always set them up again. But the strain on the heart and lungs is terrible, and nothing but use can accustom a man living nearly all his life in

the plains of India to that intense heaviness of both himself and his accoutrements which, in these highlands, is the most conspicuous sensation. I have elsewhere referred in more detail to the physical experiences and sufferings of the troops, and these circumstances of all our work in Tibet should be borne in mind as an ever-present environment, from the first climbing of the heights of Changu or Ling-tu to the scaling of the little ridge between Potala and Chagpo-ri.

Ra-lung is divided by a small stream into two parts. The Tibetan village lies to the south, a mere cluster of common adobe huts whitewashed or in ruins. On the northern side of this affluent is the Chinese post-house, set a hundred yards back from the edge of the river cliff on the very spot where there is one of the curiously marked out camping-grounds used by the two Grand Lamas alone. The bridge over the Ra-lung chu is a typical line of roughly-heaped stone piers, bridged across with larger slabs of the same schistose limestone. Crossing the river here the main road to Lhasa keeps close beside it on the north-eastern bank for one or two miles of a bad track. Small streams intersect its progress, running in the wet weather in a plashy torrent at the bottom of deep-cut ravines; otherwise the steep cliff wall comes down sharply on to the very path until the last corner is turned and the broad valley of Gom-tang is seen spreading out towards the north-west. Here the track leaves the river-side and runs northward over the gently sloping highlands beneath the snowy backbone of this great spur of the Himalayas.

Some reference should be made to these hills. A high range rises to the elevation of 24,000 feet, through which a deep fissure between Nichi-kang-sang on

Nichi-kang-sang (24,000 ft.). This peak guards the road to Lhasa over the Karo la. The track passes suddenly through the mountain barrier between the darker hill and the icefields of Nichi-kang-sang.

the north and on the south a peak, which, I believe, is known in the surveys as D 114, allows the road to Lhasa to creep along far down between the gigantic ice-fields. To the north and to the south this uplifted stretch of snow is carried onwards, terminated to the north by the abrupt valley of the Rong chu, to the south curving eastwards and forming the snowy southern frontiers of the basin of the Yam-dok tso. This description is necessary in order to make clear the importance and the military skill of the Tibetans' choice of a position to defend. No flanking movement is possible, either to the north or to the south, unless an invading force is willing to wait five days for the co-operation of any mounted column sent round by the northern route to come upon the enemy's rear from a point within a mile or two of Nagartse. A reference to the map is here necessary.

After a march of about seven miles from Ra-lung, the road keeps well away to the right to avoid the marshes covered with hummocky grass, reeds, stunted primulas, and, it must be added, quagmires through which the clear brown waters of the Ra-lung chu run ice-cold from their snowy source. Across the river the plain still extends, sweeping upwards between the projecting spurs of the western hills in long ascending plains of bare stone. As our force reached this point, it seemed only possible to continue the march in one direction. The long plain stretched out in front, ascending gently until the farthest limits cut upwards into the sky itself. But this was no road for a laden force, and, as a matter of fact, it is not used at all except by shepherds and goat-herds in the brief summer months. As I have said, the real road to Lhasa turns suddenly in-

wards under the snowy shoulders of Nichi-kang-sang; and over 8,000 feet below the gigantic mass of unrelieved ice and snow which forms his highest peak, the ribbon-like track dives abruptly into the river-bed beside a little stream which has cut its way through this gigantic curtain of rock.

The gorge that opens here is narrow and the road bad. Closely hugging the southern bluff the trang* makes its snowy way over the boulders and almost through the waters of this ice-fed rivulet. On either side the cliffs rise so steeply that one hardly catches a sight of the eternal snows that slope steeply back from the crest of these frowning heights. Now and again a ravine betrays the sparkling glory of the white ice-cornice against the deep blue of the upper sky. In May there is nothing to be seen here in the way of plants except the dead sticks of a curious thorny scrub, which during its hibernation is of an unusual pink colour, cobwebbed about with the gray dead filigree of last year's leaves. This will burn, and, indeed, it forms the only fuel to be found for many miles.

Sharply ascending, the road after a mile and a half crosses the stream now sparkling in a noisy shallow between the pebbles of its bed; and a climb of another two hundred yards brings one into an oval plain which, probably from the fact that in the summer the whole extent of it is permeated and saturated with water from the melting glaciers, the Tibetans call the Plain of Milk.† In May the cold was intense enough, except in the middle of the day, largely to reduce the volume of the

* A trang is a track cut out of the cliff beside a stream. There is a steep rock on one side and the water immediately below. It is a useful word for a feature which is not easily described otherwise.

† This is also the name of the plain in which Lhasa stands.

Nichi-kang-sang : the gorge opens out to the right for the Lhasa road.

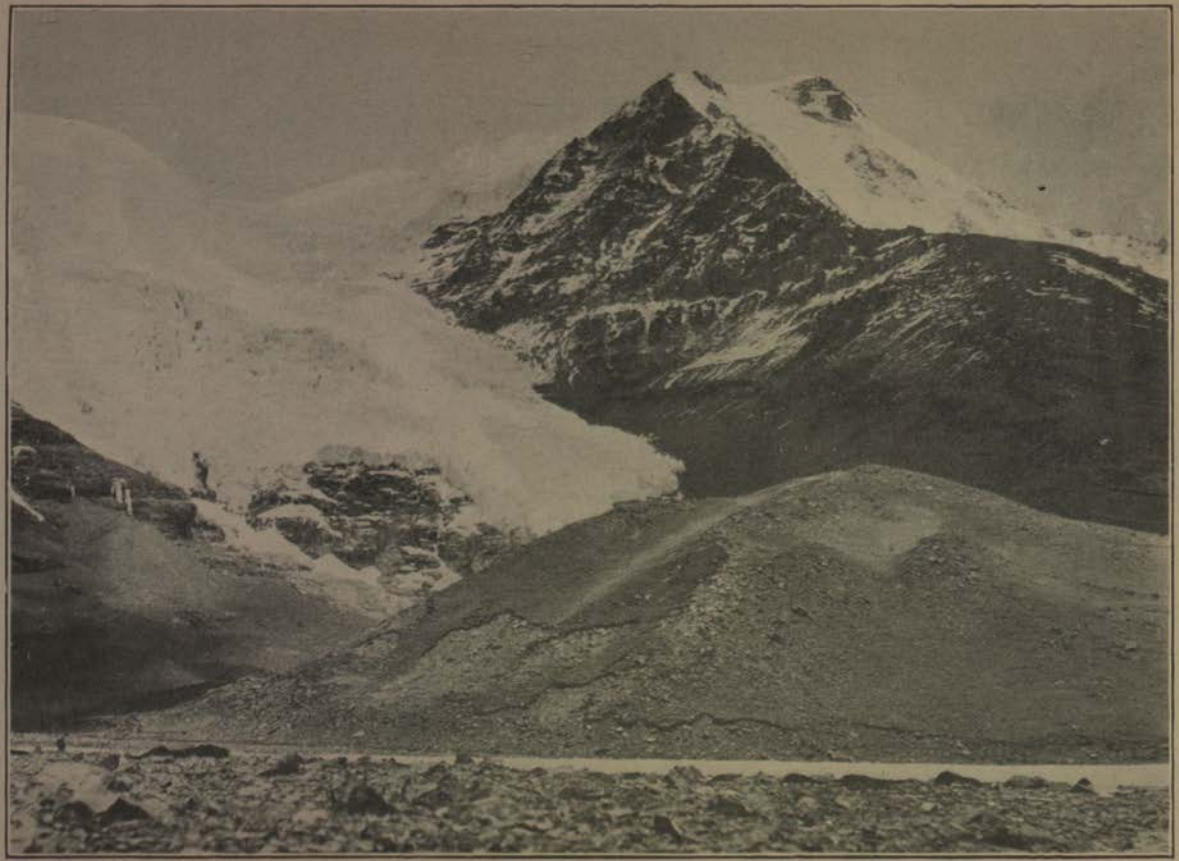
stream, and the force made its way without difficulty over the shales and slate of this lonely little flat-bottomed cup buried away nearly 17,000 feet above the sea, and ringed in by the eternal snow-fields of the Himalayas.

At the farther end, immediately under a great glacier —one infinitesimal projection of the huge estate of ice of which Nichi-kang-sang is the highest point—the force encamped. The mounted infantry had, of course, been sent on ahead. They reported that the wall was strongly held by the Tibetans; and Colonel Brander, who had accompanied them to a point a mile or two further on within range of the wall itself, made his dispositions for the next day. To the east the Karo la itself, the highest point between Lhasa and India, was within an easy climb, barely three hundred feet higher than the Plain of Milk. Beyond that the valley takes a turn to the north-west between precipitous cliffs, all immediately crowned by the snow-fields of the Nichi-kang-sang group; and at its narrowest and most precipitous point the Tibetans had built an enormous wall. This was, perhaps, the greatest triumph of Tibetan construction that we found throughout the expedition. I do not suppose that any other nation in the world, with similar means at their disposal, could hold their own for half an hour against the Tibetan in this one art of wall building. With apparent ease the most enormous stones are collected and placed with unerring judgment, and with a rapidity which seems almost miraculous to the eye-witness. This was no ordinary wall. It was composed of angular and well-adjusted pieces of granite about two feet in thickness; the loop-holes, at a height of about four feet, were constructed with wide-angled "splays" permitting an extensive field of

fire; and above these carefully made little embrasures there was head cover for at least another twelve inches. Between each man's recess the Tibetans had built up a partition wall of heavy slabs of stone, so that the damage caused by direct shell fire was reduced to a minimum, and loss by enfilading shrapnel almost entirely avoided.

The Karo la—16,600 ft. above the sea. The glacier descends to the road immediately outside this picture to the left.

At this time the wall was about eight hundred yards long; the enemy, as you may see from the accompanying plan, had thrown forward sangars, one or more on either side, which at once prevented any chance of an easy flanking movement, or, indeed, of our bringing forward without danger either the maxims or the main body of the force; and secure in this



The glacier on the Karo la road.

position they awaited our coming on the following morning.

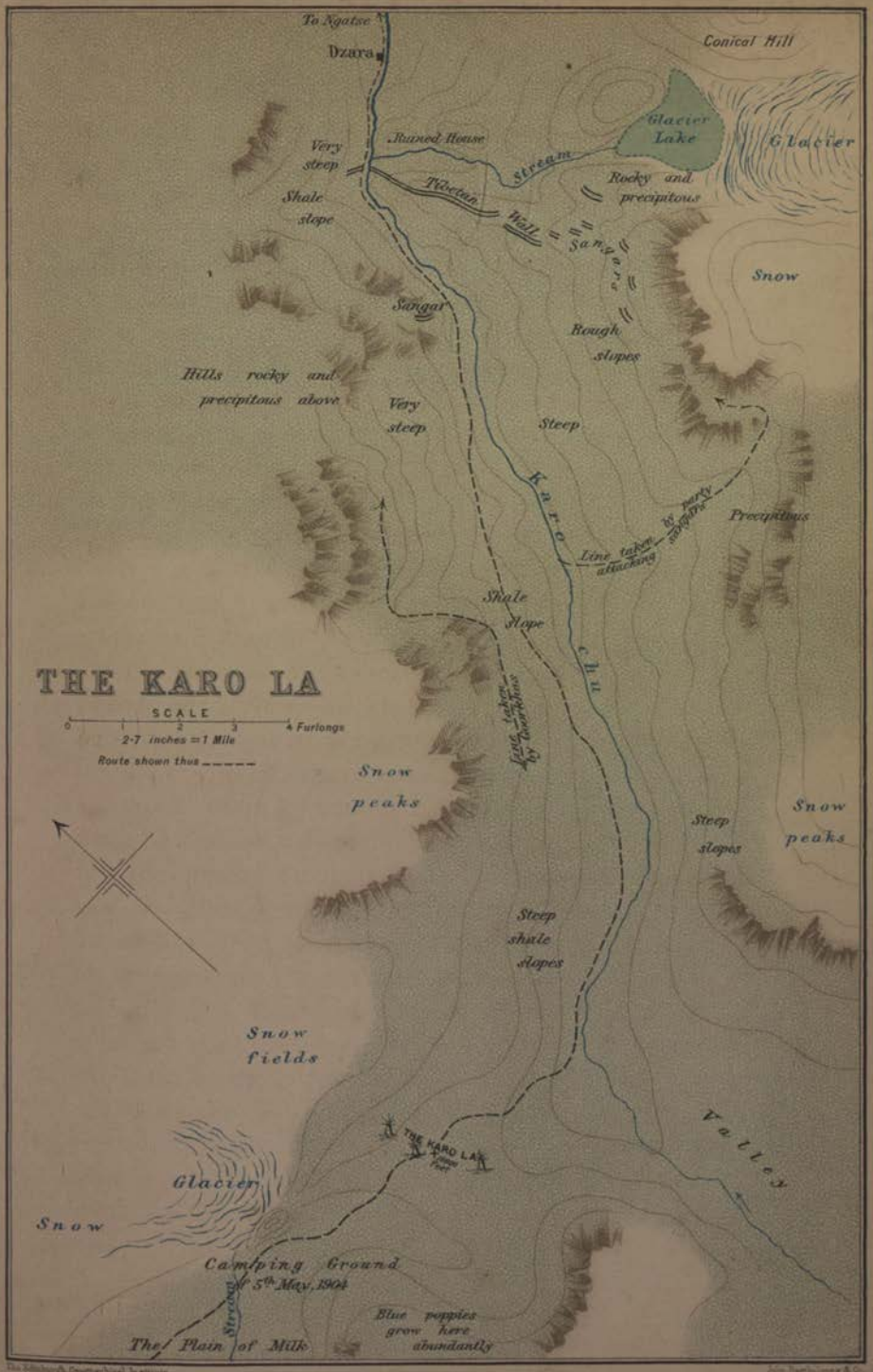
It was by no means a promising task for the small forces to attempt, and whatever anxiety Colonel Brander might naturally have entertained as to the rapid success of the enterprise was gravely increased by two despatches which an urgent messenger, riding through the night, had brought from Gyantse. The first was a telegram from General Macdonald, far to the south, expressing his disapproval and insisting that the force should instantly retire, unless it were at the moment of the receipt of the orders irrevocably committed to an engagement with the enemy. In itself this was not calculated to encourage a man immediately confronted with a difficult military problem. That in any case he would have regarded himself as irrevocably committed there can be no doubt ; retreat under the circumstances would have been a serious blunder, even though no actual contact between the two forces had yet taken place. But with characteristic loyalty, Colonel Younghusband, who throughout had accepted full responsibility for the expedition, appended to this message the opinion that under no circumstances should the proposed operation be abandoned or delayed.

The other news was much more serious. A postscript to the letter, in which Colonel Younghusband confirmed his instructions, gave the intelligence that before dawn on the previous morning the mission post at Gyantse had been surrounded by 800 armed Tibetans, and that the attack, although beaten off by the reduced garrison of the place, had been renewed at once by bombardment from the abandoned jong, which had been retaken by another column of similar strength.

This was grave indeed, and though it was necessary to dismiss it from all consideration till the day's work in front of him was done, this double intelligence greatly increased the anxiety with which Colonel Brander set himself to secure, not a victory only, but a victory that must be complete at any cost and before nightfall.

As we have seen, the Tibetans had built sangars on both sides of the valley in advance of the wall. Two of these sangars—one on each side—were occupied by about thirty men apiece, and Major Row and a company of Gurkhas were sent forward to the left to secure the northern outwork. At the same time two companies of the 32nd Pioneers had been sent down the river-bed towards the wall. One, under Captain Bethune, arrived almost at the barrier itself, but so heavy was the fire from the loopholes, and so impossible any effective reply, that cover had to be taken under the river bank itself, some two or three hundred yards away. The second company, under Captain Cullen, fought its way across an open stretch of ground to comparative security within a fold in the ground, about the same distance from the wall. Further advance was impossible, though Captain Bethune very early in the day made a magnificent but doomed attempt to carry the wall by assault. It was here that he was killed, close under the very wall itself; according to one account he was at the moment of his death even clutching the barrel of a protruding matchlock. He was killed on the instant, and the force thereby lost the most popular, and, perhaps, also the most capable of the junior regimental officers. The Sikhs under his command retreated to their former cover and held their places for the remainder of the day.

A small body of pioneers had been detached to drive



THE KARO LA

SCALE

0 1 2 3 4 Furlongs

2·7 inches = 1 Mile

Route shown thus _____

The Edinburgh Geographical Institute
John Bartholomew & Co.

the enemy from the sangar which was being held on the southern slope, opposite to that towards which Major Row was now advancing; but it was almost impossible to climb the slippery shale slopes, which had already assumed their utmost angle of repose; there was no cover, and it was necessary to abandon this direct attack. Thereupon Colonel Brander had recourse to an heroic measure. A dozen men under a native officer, Wassawa Singh, were sent up the almost perpendicular face of the 1,500-foot southern scarp, in order that from the ice field above they might enfilade the sangar which was the chief obstacle to a direct attack upon the wall.

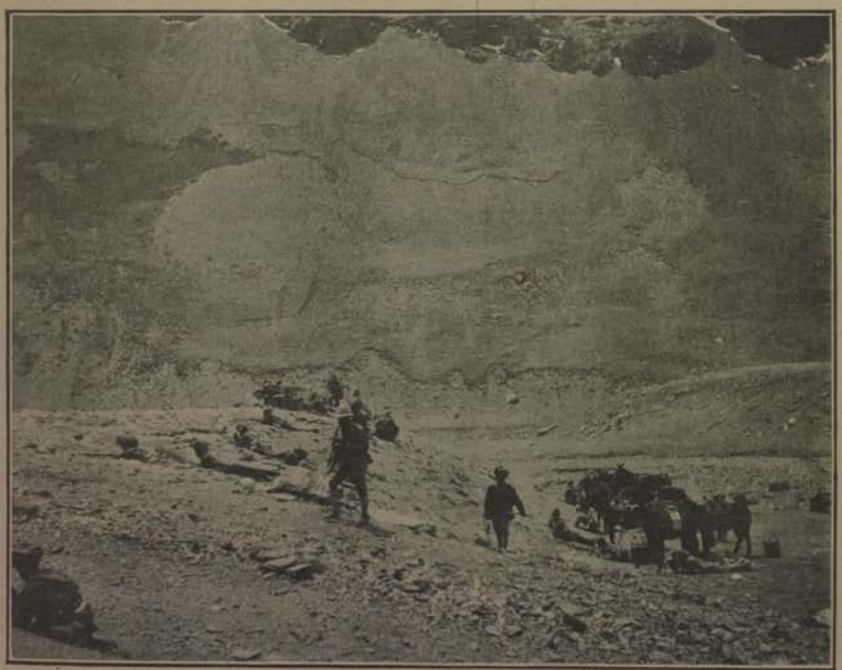
Meanwhile, on the left the Gurkhas had pressed on pluckily over the difficult sliding surface of the northern slope, now glissading for a dozen feet, now helping each other up over a difficult spur; here creeping under a projecting shelf on hands and knees, there making a quick dash across an open space, but always under a steady and pretty well directed fire from the sangar they had been told to clear. After a time advance along their present line was seen to be impossible, and the whole action of the morning was suspended while Major Row detailed a few of his small force to climb the rock face overhead commanding the enemy's sangar. For two hours it was the guns only that answered the fire from the wall and from the sangars. There was a deadlock, and if no means could be found to drive the enemy from the advanced defences which they were holding so gallantly, there seemed indeed little chance of doing anything more until nightfall. It was an anxious moment, and Colonel Brander did not spare himself. Up with the maxims, within easy range of the Tibetan rifles, he watched the developments of the fight.

But little by little the almost indistinguishable dots moved upwards along the face of the cliff to the south. A deep chimney afforded them both protection from the Tibetans manning the wall, and the bare possibility of an ascent. What the hardship must have been of climbing up to an altitude which could not have been less than 18,500 feet it is difficult for the ordinary reader to conceive. Hampered alike by his accoutrements and by the urgent anxiety for rapidity, Wassawa Singh still gave his men but scanty opportunities of rest. It was such a climb as many a member of the Alpine Club would, under the best circumstances, have declined to attempt, and the Order of Merit which was afterwards conferred upon Wassawa Singh was certainly one of the most hardly earned distinctions of the campaign.

Still, in spite of everything, the little figures crept upwards, and at last reached the line of perpetual snow, where they could be seen clambering and crawling against the dazzling surface of white. There was still a long way for them to go when an outbreak of fire from the southern slope of the valley showed that Major Row's men had established themselves above the enemy's right-hand sangar. A brisk crackle of musketry broke out; the exchanges were heavy, but the issue was never in any doubt. Covered by the fire from the party above, Major Row led the main body forwards over the unprotected glacis, at the upper end of which the little fort had been made. The enemy's fire slackened, broke out again, and finally died down as the surviving Tibetans flung away their guns and attempted to escape down the almost perpendicular slope of the hill. Not one of them got away. The wretched men one after another scrambled amid the pitiless bullets that pecked

up the dust all round, and then slid in an inert mass till they lay quiet on the road below.

With a cheer that we could hear with odd distinctness in the bottom of the valley, the Gurkhas sprang forward and captured the post. But even then much remained to do. The holders of the southern sangar



During the Karo la fight. Colonel Brander (in the foreground) moves up to reconnoitre. This was probably the most elevated spot in the world at which hostilities have been carried on.

kept up as steady a fire as before at anyone who showed himself, and it was impossible to move on from the recently captured outpost so as to enfilade the main position, which ended on the north against a precipitous cliff. For upwards of an hour the fight again languished. Nothing could be seen of Wassawa Singh

and his little force; they had taken a course which was hidden behind the edge of the rock and ice above us.

Nothing in Tibet is more curiously deceptive than the little upright boulders which stand, for all the world like men, against the sky line of the hills, and time after time a false alarm was given that the Pioneers had at last reached the mountain brow from which they could enfilade the enemy. At last, however, one of the stones upon which our glasses had been fixed for so long seemed to move and, half-fainting over it, a tiny figure halted and unslung the miniature rifle into its right hand. He was joined in a moment by another, and his comrades in the valley below gave the first warning to the defenders of the sangar by raising a thin distant cheer. The enemy did not wait; not more than four or five of the escalading force had reached their goal before the Tibetans bolted from their advanced post and ran back across the open coverless slopes of the mountain side to the protection of the great wall. In a moment the fire was concentrated upon the fugitives, not only from three points of the compass, but from angles which must have varied nearly 180°. There may have been about twenty-five men in the sangar: of these two or three were hit at once, and the remainder, clambering and sprawling over the slippery shale, made their way back in a rain of bullets. Rifle fire is one of the most unaccountable things in the world. Judging by the standards of the shooting range it would seem impossible that even one man should have escaped from this converging battery; as a matter of fact, though the aim was fairly good, that of Lieut. Hadow's maxim being especially well managed I do not think that of the

BEFORE SUNRISE ON THE KARO LA.

remainder more than five men fell before the shelter of the wall was reached. But the day was won; for the Tibetans behind the wall, who cannot have lost more than two or three men throughout the whole day, and whose position was really hardly weakened as yet, fled as one man back down the valley of the Karo chu. We afterwards heard that all day long there had been a steady melting away of this force, and that in consequence reinforcements of 500 men from Nagartse, sixteen miles down the road, had been sent up to stiffen the courage of the waverers.

We found, on passing over the wall, that the tents were still standing, the fires still alight, and the water in the cooking vessels still boiling. Furs, blankets, horse furniture, spears, powder-flasks, quick-match, bags of tsamba, skins of butter, tightly-stuffed cushions, everything was there as the Tibetans had left it in their haste; but almost no rifles or matchlocks were recovered.

By the time the force had secured the position Captain Ottley, with his mounted infantry, was hurrying after the flying hordes. At one time it seemed more than likely that his little force of fifty or sixty men would be surrounded by the compact body of reinforcements which was halting for a rest at Ring la nine miles away, when the dreaded mounted infantry swept round the corner. Never was the inherent incapacity of the Tibetan as a soldier better shown. There is no doubt that the very names of Ottley and the mounted infantry were associated by this time in the minds of the Tibetans with an almost superhuman strength and invulnerability. These reinforcements, which consisted to a great extent of monks, made almost no attempt

to defend themselves, but fled in all directions up the ravines and clefts of the sides of the valley—anywhere out of the reach of the "Nightmare" and his men. The blow inflicted upon the enemy was trebled by this successful pursuit, and in Lhasa afterwards we heard that the Tibetans themselves admitted 600 casualties. This is certainly an over-statement, made partly in order to justify their expulsion from so strong a position, partly also to persuade the authorities that it was no longer any use attempting to oppose our advance. We took a few prisoners. Our own casualties, besides the loss of Bethune—a host in himself—were but four killed and thirteen wounded. The day's work reflects the utmost credit on the two outflanking parties, and if it had been possible to retain any sort of control of the position we had gained, this fight in itself might have been the turning point of the expedition. As it was, there was nothing to do but to return with the utmost speed to Gyantse. Colonel Brander had not the time even to pull down the Tibetans' wall. The tents and the ammunition were destroyed, as much damage to the wall as could be done in the short time was carried out, and then the force returned to their camping-place of the previous night four miles back in the Plain of Milk.

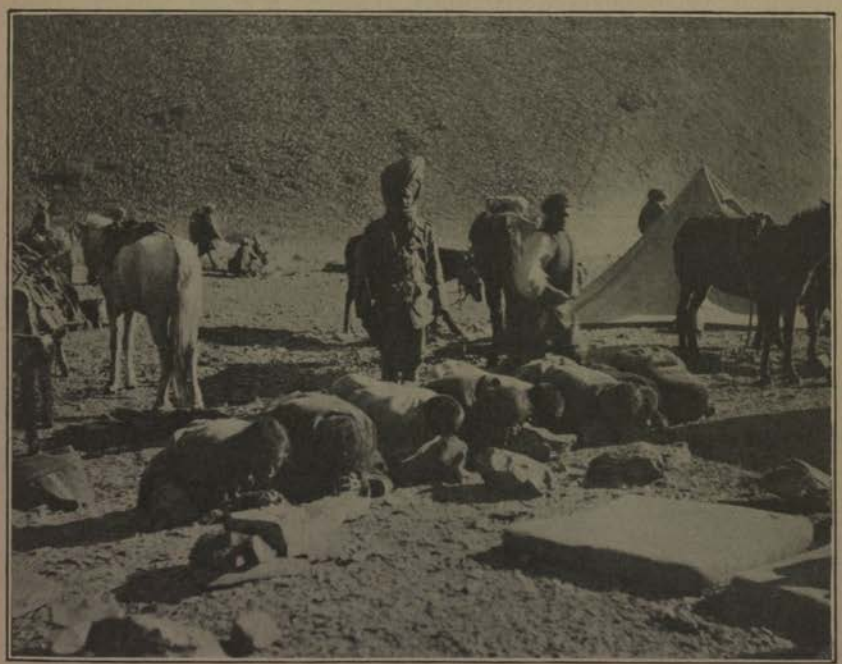
The altitude to which the southern flanking party attained was probably the highest point on the earth's surface at which an engagement has ever taken place, and the accounts given by the men of the terrible labour of climbing, and of the utter inability, at this height of over 18,000 feet, to do more than crawl forward listlessly, were not the least interesting part of this extraordinary action.

The Glacier Lake.

ALL THE BACKGROUND, WHITE AND BLACK ALIKE, SO FAR AS THE LINE OF SLOPING SHALE ON THE RIGHT, IS ICE. *Granite, Payne's grey, silver and blue; aquamarine lights in crevasses.*

THE GLACIER LAKE AT THE KARO LA.

Immediately beyond the wall is a very curious freak of nature. The ice-field on the south here comes down to a basin three hundred yards across, the lower or northern end of which is banked up ; and the melting of the ice has produced there a deep and almost clear lake, the waters of which on one side lap up against



Tibetan prisoners taken at the Karo la.

the high glacier itself.* The Tibetans, recognizing any natural eccentricity as the predestined home of devils, have taken the greatest pains, with little pyramids of quartz and fluttering flags, to propitiate

* In the photogravure the whole of the farther wall is of ice, whether black or white to the eye.

the evil spirits of this pretty little imitation of the Merjelensee.

On the following morning, the 7th of May, the column began the return march, and Captain O'Connor and I set off in good time to cover before nightfall the forty-four miles which lay between us and Gyantse.

"Tim."

CHAPTER IX.

THE NIGHT ATTACK ON THE MISSION.

WHAT exactly we should find when we reached Gyantse neither O'Connor nor myself had the least idea. We knew that the first attack had been gallantly and satisfactorily beaten off; but we also knew that only half the Tibetan force had been employed on the 5th—knew too that the attacking party had bungled things in some way or other. We did not know the size of the guns which the Tibetans had mounted on the jong, we did not know how far the post had been surrounded, and to tell the truth we rather trusted to luck and to the shades of night to get back into the post at all. Rumour reached us when we got to Ra-lung that the Tibetans had determined to hold the gorges through which our little party, consisting of Captain Ottley with ten of his mounted infantry and our two selves, had to pass. If this were found to be the case we could hardly hope to force a way through; but we knew that the earlier we pushed on the better hope there was of being able to make our way to the open plain of Gyantse, which it was impossible for the Tibetans to barricade, and in which we might then be able to hold our own against any number the Tibetans were likely to send out from the jong to cut us off. It was an uneventful ride of fifteen miles from Ra-lung to Gobshi, and we covered it in a little over three hours. We halted at

the village of the Four Gates to collect intelligence and to rest. The head men of the village were, not unnaturally, in a state of considerable agitation. It is possible that they knew nothing whatever about the intentions or the actions of their countrymen eighteen miles away; but their nervousness inevitably suggested that they were lying when they so assured us. So we determined not to hurry on, but to take care that the evening should have set in before we reached the last and most difficult stretch of our journey.

Leaving Gobshi at half-past four in the afternoon, we moved on slowly down the valley of the Nyeru chu, watching the slow transformation of one of the finest sunsets I have ever seen in Tibet. Luckily we found all the bridges along the road intact. This was a never-ending source of amazement to us throughout the expedition. The Tibetans had never taken the trouble, or perhaps even had the idea of impeding our progress by so simple and effectual a device as the breaking of the road in any way; perhaps the most glaring example of this was seen in the way in which they eventually left for our use the two great barges at the Chak-sam ferry. The rebuilding of a bridge is no small matter in Tibet. Of wood on the spot there may be none, and in many cases, where the bridge is made of timber brought from a distance, the space crossed is much too great for the substitution of stone at a moment's notice. Accustomed as we were, it was a relief to find that the stone causeway at Malang, about three miles from Gobshi, was standing intact. After that there was at least no bridge by the destruction of which they could bar our return to Gyantse that night.

There was not a sign of a Tibetan anywhere. The

little houses and rare gompas, nestling here and there in the bare valleys to the north and south, showed no sign of life. So we made our way unnoticed till we faced the crimson blaze of the sunset over the open plain of Gyantse, two miles beyond the big chorten which is the most conspicuous object of the track astraddle of the road just where a sharp turn in the river half encloses a wooded peninsula. We moved on in the dying red light for a couple of miles, and then the night of these high uplands crept in upon us from all sides. As we passed the house of the eldest son of the Maharajah of Sikkim we could still distinguish dimly the houses near Né-nyeng. A mile and a half further on we passed the long ruins of a battlemented wall and were just able to distinguish the jong in the darkness as we moved over the low neck of white quartzite, which here thrusts out into the plain a line of little peaks. After that the gloom deepened and soon we could hardly see each other. It was a moonless night, and four miles from home we literally could not see the ground under our horses' hoofs. Now and then a Tibetan wayfarer ran into our arms before he knew what or who we were; such travellers we questioned and turned behind us. The explanation each gave of his night wandering was not wholly uninteresting. One man had been into the city for a charm for his sick wife, and was returning confident in the efficacy of his closely cuddled treasure. Another man was a lama who had been relieved by a friend at a monastery all day, and was hurrying back to keep his word and release his already over-taxed proxy. A third had an ugly story to tell to us—he was the first who gave us any information of the horrible fate which had overtaken our unfortunate

servants.* They all agreed that the Tibetans were holding all the houses in the plain past which our road necessarily ran; but more than that none of them honestly seemed able to tell us.

By this time our escort had been reduced to six men. Captain Ottley had decided to remain behind at Gobshi to secure a safe escort for a belated baggage mule and her leader. So we moved on through the night, and for the first time I realised the skill of a native of India as a tracker. There was not the slightest indication of a road anywhere. There was not a light visible in the whole plain, and even the stars were obscured by the light night mist that was rising into the cold air from the still warm fields. By daylight one would oneself have made half-a-dozen mistakes in trying to pick one's way across those three miles of flat country, deeply intersected in every direction with wide and often unfordable water-courses; but now in the dark the guidance of our Sikhs was unfailing. One road there was, and one only, after we had struck out towards Chang-lo from the beaten path. This took a fantastic course over the ploughed fields, along the bunds containing the marshy squares where the first barley was beginning to show itself, across the irrigation channels by single-stone bridges, swerving now to the right and now to the left, dipping down into a dry water-course, rising on the farther side at some unindicated point, brushing past little clumps of sallow-thorn, skirting an old reservoir, and often verging too close to be comfortable to some occupied house which was invisible at twenty yards, but was betrayed by the furious barking of

* All the Tibetan servants of the Mission caught that night in Gyantse were put to a barbarously cruel death.

the inevitable watchdogs. Along this tortuous path the Sikhs of our escort led us in the darkness without the slightest hesitation or mistake. Even at the end, when a single light could be seen from a window in the upper storey of our besieged post, they made no mistake by going straight towards it. A sharp turn to the

The mess room of the Mission at Chang-lo.

right along an iris-covered embankment saved us a heavy wetting in the deepest water-channel of the plain.

As we approached Chang-lo we suddenly remembered that we were in considerably more danger from the high-strung watchfulness of our own sentries than from all the forces that Tibet could put into the field. After a while we could barely distinguish against the vague duskiness of the sky the mass of our tall poplars. And

then two men were sent on to feel our way into the post—no easy matter. The garrison were not expecting us, and the approach to a defended position is a difficult matter, wholly apart from the possibility of the sentry firing before he challenges. Barbed wire entanglements, well-planned stakes and abattis of felled tree-tops and other impedimenta are no light things to penetrate on a dark night; and in the present case we had no means of knowing what additional precautions the garrison had, as a matter of course, taken. But all was well; and at about a quarter to ten we found ourselves in the Mission mess heartily welcomed as earnest of better things to come.

The story of the attack on the Mission in the early hours of May 5th reads like a romance. As I have said, news had come that a body of Tibetans was moving up the valley of the Nyang chu to Dongtse, twelve miles away to the north-west. These men, 1,600 in number, no doubt had their instructions, and it subsequently was shown that those instructions had been given them by the Dorjieff himself. They had to retake the jong and annihilate the Mission with its escort. It may be questioned, however, whether they would ever have had the determination to attempt to carry out the latter part of their orders, if at the last moment they had not received what must have seemed to them the miraculous news that two-thirds of the defenders of Chang-lo had suddenly been called away. Marching in two bands through the night of the 4th of May, one-half reoccupied the jong, while the other moved as silently as shadows up to the very walls of the English post.

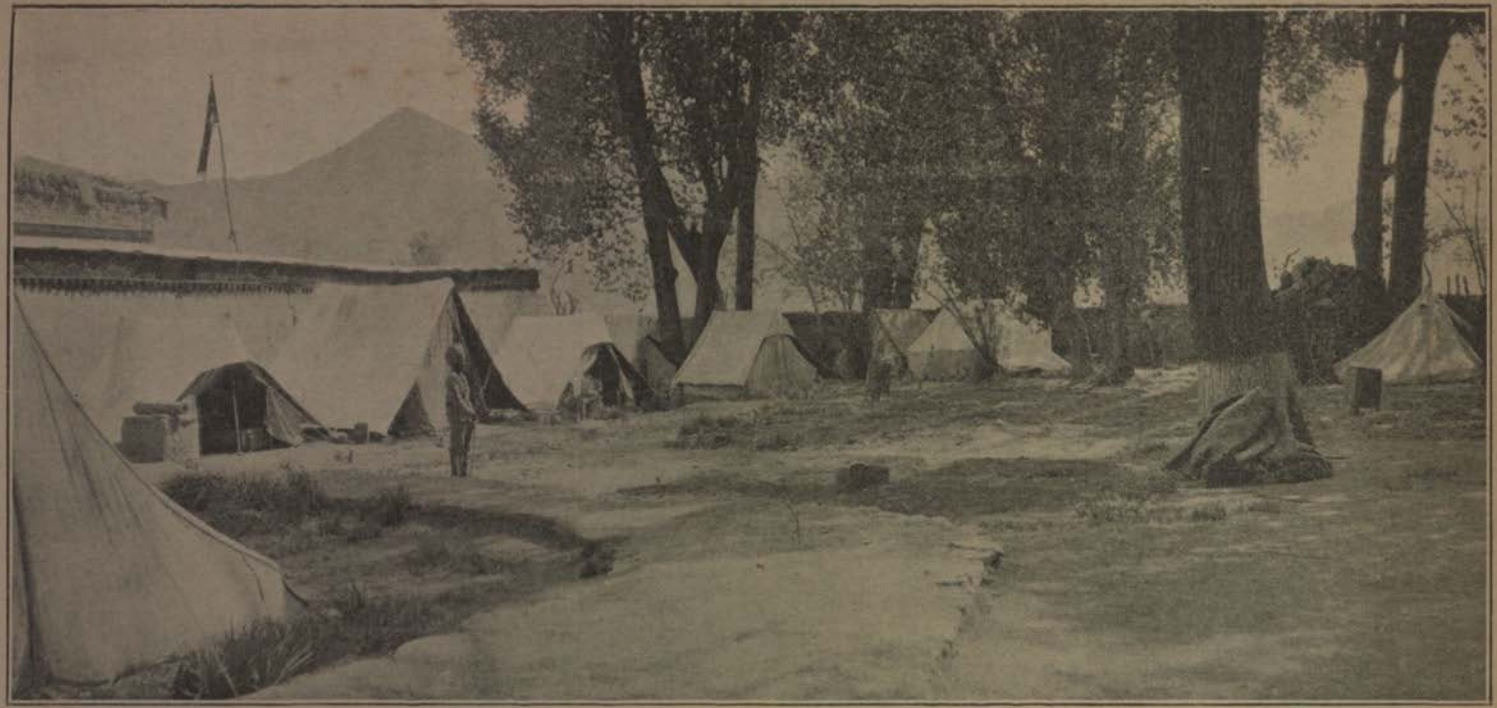
The entrance to Chang-lo showing stakes and defences. Gyantse Jong appears to the extreme right.

Speculation as to what would have happened if another course had been adopted is, perhaps, useless; but there was a fair consensus of opinion in the post that if the Tibetans had simply thrown away their useless firearms, and had contented themselves with rushing the sentries with drawn swords, the issue of that evening might have been painfully different. Actually, the men who reached the post were under the walls by about three in the morning; and there in silence they seem to have remained for nearly an hour. Not a sentry perceived them; and if it had not been for an alarm given by the last joined recruit of the whole force, a boy who had not been thought to have sufficient steadiness for the work of a soldier, and was only accepted because of the unexpected loss of another man, they could without difficulty have made their way within striking distance of at least two of the four sentries. This boy, looking through the darkness, thought he saw the movement of what might have been a man about twenty yards from the southern entrance. It will be remembered that our relations with the Tibetans were of the most friendly character, and as a matter of fact the nightly visits paid by the followers of the Mission to Gyantse, for more or less disreputable purposes, must have been well within his knowledge; he must, in fact, have known that at that moment there were at least six of the servants of the force in the town; and it says a good deal for his coolness and discipline that, whether he were betraying a friend or not, he did not hesitate for a moment to rouse the echoes of the night by a hasty shot following upon a single loud challenge.

The effect of a shot at night upon a defended post is something which should be experienced to be fully

understood; the whole place is galvanised as though it had received an electric shock. And every other sentry realised in a second the danger that lay in the swarming black ring of men, which now, for the first time, were seen clearly enough encircling the whole post. The Tibetans also were naturally startled into action; they stood up under our very walls and actually used our own loopholes, thrusting the muzzles of their matchlocks into the Mission compound. A doctor was the first man to dash into the place from the Reduit and warn Colonel Younghusband of his danger. His description of the compound is curious; he says that a network of flashes and humming bullets struck in every direction over the enclosure. By some merciful accident not a single man was hit, though several of the tents received four or five bullets straight through them. Captain Walton in particular had a very narrow escape; he said that the first thing that he realised, after this rude awakening, was the muzzles of two or three rusty matchlocks poking down through the wall in his direction. One thing probably saved the situation; the Tibetans being naturally shorter men than the Sikhs, for whom the loop-holes had originally been made, and at no time paying much attention to fire discipline or aim, simply held their guns up over their heads and fired through the loop-holes in any direction that was convenient. For a few seconds, which seemed almost as many minutes, the walls remained unmanned; then round by the water gate the quick reports of the Lee-Metford heralded a blaze of fire from every point of the perimeter.

From the point of view of the Tibetans, the moment chosen for the attack was most unfortunate. They



Inside the compound at Chang-lo. Colonel Younghusband's tent is the large one underneath the Union Jack. The jingal balls struck into the compound over the sandbags on the upper roof. The vegetable garden occupies the centre. To the left on a mounting block is one of the jingals we captured at Pala. As will be seen, the jingal is by no means the toy weapon it was supposed at home to be.

secured, indeed, for themselves the advantage of an approach in the dark, and, of course, had they been successful in effecting their purpose and forcing a hand-to-hand struggle inside the walls of the post, the coming of dawn might have served them in good stead. As it was, however, the growing light found them, not only still outside our defences, but a beaten crowd, for whom there was not a stick of cover, huddled up under the walls of the post. When their inevitable flight had to be attempted, some fled at once amongst the trees of the plantation behind Chang-lo; some hid themselves idiotically in the walled-up bays of the bridge, where they were caught like rats in a trap by the first skirmishing party that set out to clear the ground. The luckiest were the most cowardly; large numbers, as soon as our firing broke out, had made their way back in terror through the shrubs and willows immediately overhanging the river bank towards the white house, 600 yards ahead of us, towards the jong, which was afterwards captured by us and known as the Gurkhas' post. Here they were in safety. On the way they passed a small shrine which Captain Walton had been using as his consulting room and hospital for Tibetan patients.

It was from this hospital that the first intimation of anything wrong had been received. On the morning of the previous day Captain Walton's suspicions had been aroused by the sudden exodus of a very large number of his patients. One and all seemed anxious to get away, and though this might really mean little with a shy and probably mistrustful people like the good folk of Gyantse, there was a unanimity about the whole matter which caused him to make some disappointed

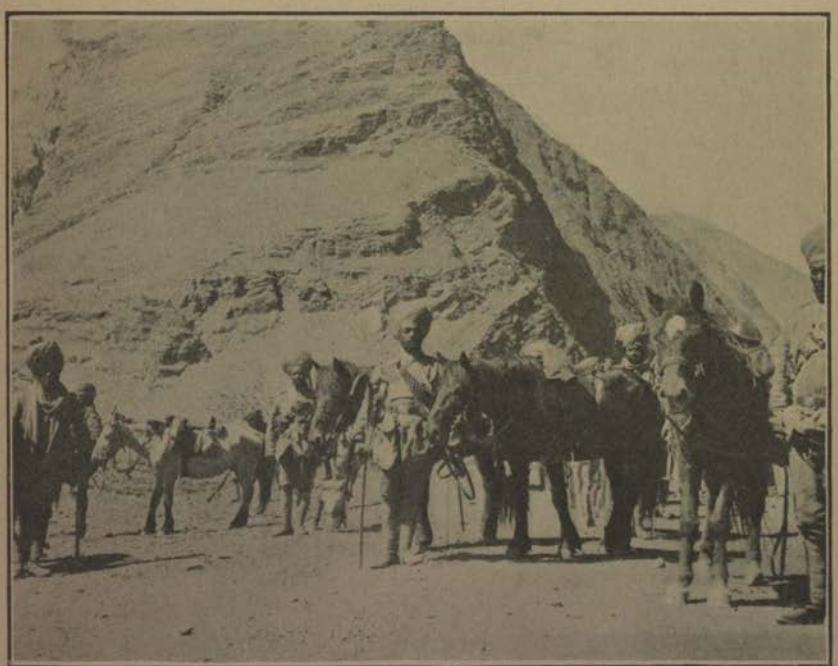
comment, and then it appeared that one of his patients had been told of the intention of the Tibetans to make a night attack upon the Mission. Such rumours had, of course, been common ever since our occupation of the place, and had been proved time after time to be the merest canards. Captain Walton paid very little attention to it, but he was sufficiently aware of a change in the attitude of his patients—such of them as remained for treatment—to make him report the matter to Colonel Younghusband that evening, without, however, expressing any belief or, indeed, much interest in the matter. By this time his hospital was empty of all its inmates except, I believe, one or two bedridden men who could find no one to come and help them away.

I have said that the luckiest were the most cowardly, but for the main body of the attacking force there was no help. When their attack failed and flight was necessary they were obliged to make the best of their way back across the flat plain to the jong and Gyantse. The defenders' post numbered in all about 170 men, but this number was to a large extent weakened by the fact that Colonel Brander had naturally taken with him the strongest men of the force, and those who remained behind were, certainly to the extent of forty per cent., either weakened by dysentery or actually in hospital blankets. But, well or ill, every man reached for his rifle and came out to his place. The members of the Mission—Colonel Younghusband, Lieut.-Colonel Waddell, Captain Ryder, and, it should not be forgotten, Mr. Mitter, the confidential clerk of the Mission—immediately manned the upper works, and a certain number of the followers displayed considerable martial energy in positions of more or less personal danger. About a

The plain of Gyantse looking S.E. from Tsechen. The jong and monastery (Palkhor choide) are conspicuous in the middle distance. Chang-lo is hidden in the patch of trees an inch and a half to the right of the jong.

The plain of Gyantse looking S.S.E. from Tsechen. This view connects with that opposite.

dozen of the mounted infantry had been left by Colonel Brander, and these men saddled their ponies with feverish haste. Bullets were still singing over the post, but there was no doubt that the Tibetans had been successfully beaten off, and the lesson to be taught them was one which mounted men could best convey. The



Some of the M.I.

real flight of the Tibetans did not begin till forty minutes after the first alarm, and though it would be inaccurate to say that the issue was really in doubt after the first five or ten, it will be seen that the engagement was for a time hotly contested, and it is doubtful whether the Tibetans lost many men till they broke and ran. After that it was simply a case of shooting down the flying

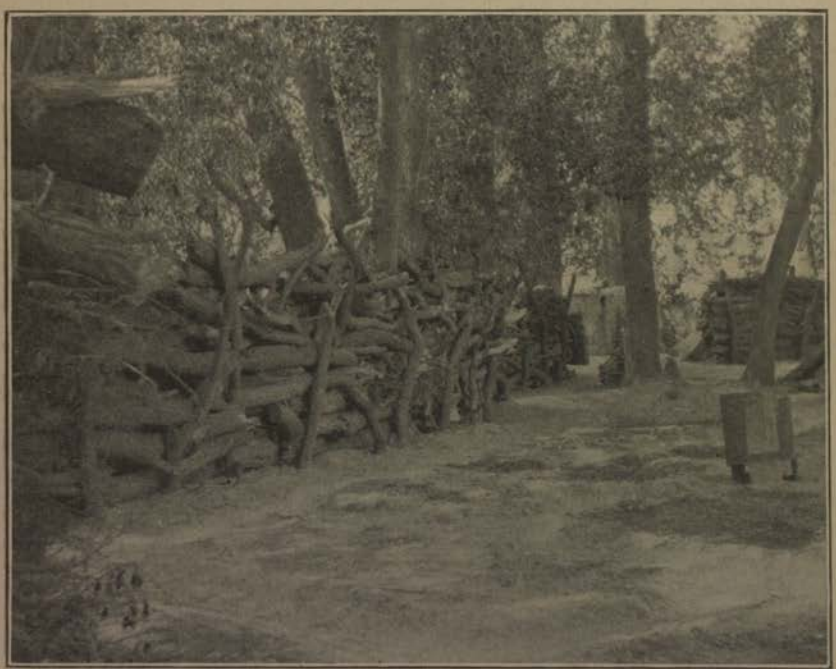
figures in the grey morning twilight. It is one of the peculiarities of Tibet that as soon as a leafless bush can be distinguished twenty yards away in the dawn you can almost as clearly see a willow tree on a slope a mile and a half distant. The tiny body of irregular cavalry, made all the more irregular by the volunteers who aided in the pursuit, were busily and systematically clearing the plantation of the enemy, and preparing to carry a counter attack home to the very foot of the rock from which the first jingal balls were now being fired towards Chang-lo.

The Tibetans left behind them but few under the actual walls of the post, but 180 dead were found within a radius of one thousand yards, and, under the circumstances, at least three times that number must have been wounded. On our own side—besides our wretched servants and the unhappy Nepali shepherd who was caught outside the defences watching his flock through the night, and fell a shocking victim to the Tibetans' savage lust for blood—there were but two casualties all this time. This is but another example of the immunity which, time after time, was enjoyed by our men against all probability and, indeed, experience.

The work of the mounted infantry was finished about six o'clock in the full light of the quick Asiatic dawn. The Tibetans flying helplessly over the flat irrigated fields had been scattered to the winds. The luckier ones on horseback made good their escape almost to a man. The others either ran for their lives with the characteristic heavy-shouldered tramp of their race, or hid in vain desperation among the irrigation channels of the fields. One or two fled to the river bank and there immersed themselves, leaving their

mouths and noses only above the thick, brown flood, under the friendly shelter of an overhanging shrub. One or two by the banks, with animal-like cunning, feigned death, and when detected pretended to be severely wounded.

An hour and a half after this heavy and responsible



Traverses of timber built for the protection of Chang-lo.

work two Sikhs threw the post-bags of the dak across their saddles and moved out to take the mails as usual to Sau-gang. Later in the day another man cantered off on the road to the Karo la. The lesson of the morning was emphasized by a spasmodic bombardment all the day, and a Sepoy was killed while standing almost immediately behind a high adobe wall. Captain Ryder in-

stantly assumed the direction of the additional defences which had to be made, and the next two days produced an extraordinary alteration in the aspect of Chang-lo. Great traverses of timber logs, interspersed with granite boulders, rose up like magic everywhere. The Masbi Sikh is by nature and intention a lazy man; yet it is possible that no Sikh in the history of his race ever worked with such desperation as the hundred labourers who, in very truth, had to work like the famous artizans under the direction of Nehemiah. There was no time to lose, for the only information we could certainly get from the prisoners was that more men and larger guns were even at that moment being hurried up against us from Lhasa.

Such was the state of affairs when O'Connor and I rode in on the evening of the 7th. The column from the Karo la could not arrive until the afternoon of the 9th; an attack, meanwhile, was threatened for that same night. But the Tibetans had had too heavy a lesson, and nothing, therefore, was done before the arrival of the main body of the defenders had put an end to all hope of carrying the post by storm.

As soon as the place was put in a proper condition of defence we had leisure to consider the extraordinary change in the political situation, which had been caused by the attack of the Tibetans. Of course, in one way it simplified the position enormously; there could no longer be any pretence on the part of the Tibetans that they were a peace-loving and long-suffering race; the issues were cleared. It was obvious that no negotiations had ever been intended. We were able at last to estimate the authority of the Chinese suzerains and the influence of the Amban himself—neither existed.

Note.
The gun emplacements of Gyantse Jong were 1350 yards North of the Mission Maxim
CHANGLO
NEAR GYANTSE
THE DEFENCES
MAY—JUNE 1904
SCALE
0 5 10 20 30 Feet
Houses of Solid Masonry
Traverses shown thus
Abattis
Horn Work
Maxim
Maxim
MISSION
Colonel Younghusband's Tent
Fields
Barbed Wire
Stakes
Garden
Willows
Chortens
Gate
REDUIT
Gate
Gate
Gurha Gate
Fields
Stakes
Water Gate
M.I.
Guns
East Bastion
Dead Tree
Bank
Riverbed
Bridge
Low Water R.
Flood Level August 1904
NYANCHU
Riverbed
Low Water
Mule & Horse Lines
Stakes
Stakes
Stakes
Stakes
Barbed Wire
Iris Plantation

Unless we were willing to help ourselves it was in a moment clear that the Chinese were neither willing nor able to help us. I do not suppose that anyone in his senses has ever seriously criticised the right of the Tibetans to, massacre the Mission if they could, and if they were ready to accept the consequences of success. It is true that the circumstances of this attack during a period of practical armistice, while we were awaiting, if not perhaps expecting, the advent of the Amban, gave some reasonable ground of complaint, but as we were ourselves tarred with the same brush, reproach was a boomerang-like weapon for us to employ. The situation, as I have said, was undoubtedly cleared, but it may well be doubted whether that was any particular gratification to the Cabinet at home. That it was not is perhaps clear from the fact that Lord Lansdowne seems immediately to have gone out of his way to make a gratuitous re-statement of the pledges which the Government had given six months before to Russia. Herein, perhaps, there is some just reason to demur to the diplomacy of Whitehall. It is an open secret that our policy in Egypt just then demanded that we should be on good terms with Russia, but even so, it seemed common sense to lay every conceivable stress upon an active hostility which was at once recognised as due to the presence of a Russian subject in Lhasa. In any case, whatever the responsibility of an unauthorised representative of the great northern neighbour of Tibet, it was perfectly clear that the attack on the Mission had practically justified to the full the presumptions of active hostility which had seemed to us to necessitate the accompaniment of the Mission by a strong escort. The chief point, therefore, which had excited the mistrust

of continental critics was clearly demonstrated as a wise and, indeed, a very necessary precaution on our part.

More than this, the behaviour of the Tibetans had justified at a stroke our taking action in the matter at all. It was clear from the kindly reception which the Mission received on its coming to Gyantse from everyone except the local representatives of the close Lamaic corporation that governs the country, and from the subsequent attack promoted by that corporation, that our forecast was correct, not only in assuming that the Lamaic hierarchy in no way represented the feeling of the bulk of the population, but also that it was from the priestly autocrats of Tibet alone that danger to British interests was to be feared. It was no part of the business of the British Government to play the rôle of Perseus rescuing Andromeda from a monster; but somewhat to our surprise we found that the policy of the Viceroy, begun for very different and somewhat prosaic reasons, was actually compelling us into a position which was not very different. We had begun, without questioning the form of government which obtained in Tibet, by working for the conclusion of some agreement with a properly accredited representative of the country. We had accepted the peculiarities, not to say the brutalities, which mark this extreme form of religious tyranny, not in ignorance, but as being no affair of ours. With the Grand Lama as the head of the country, we had certain business to transact; and if he had been willing to meet us at Kamba jong, our difficulties would have been over. We should never have moved a mile farther into the Forbidden Country, and, perhaps, the hold of the lamas over the country

might have been even stronger than before, inasmuch as our diplomatic relations with Lhasa would have formed an additional proof of the ability of the Tibetans to manage their own foreign affairs, and of the uselessness of continuing the farce of Chinese sovereignty. This the Grand Lama failed to see, and the upshot of our interference has been that the reign of superstitious tyranny has received a severe blow, not only by the prestige we have gained by our successful advance to Lhasa, but by the deposition of the Grand Lama, and by the strength which has thereby been temporarily given to the tottering structure of Chinese sovereignty.

These considerations might perhaps have made the home authorities hesitate before wantonly reiterating to the Russians assurances which were perfectly honest but in their origin applicable only to an entirely different and much less complicated state of affairs. The attack on the Mission was the throwing down of the glove. It was a deliberate challenge on the part of an autocrat who saw that in the slowly increasing friendliness between the foreigner and the "miser" of the land, there lurked perhaps the seeds of trouble for himself in the future. We know from an excellent source that the action of the English in paying full prices, and even more than full prices, for the food-stuffs they requisitioned in the Chumbi and Nyang chu Valleys was an unexpected shock to the authorities in Lhasa; they complained of it. And knowing, as we now do, whose influence lay at the bottom of this night attack upon the Mission, we can see not only a shrewd and successful scheme whereby Dorjieff himself might escape from the consequences of his own bad advice, but a not unnatural determination at all hazards to put an end to the

growing familiarity between the invaders and the invaded.

About this time in Lhasa there was a wave of mistrust of the Chinese. Actual power the Chinese had none, and the very advice of the Amban was believed to be tainted. Dorjieff had assured the government of Tibet that the English had brought into subjection the Middle Kingdom, and were using to the full the authority of the Chinese representatives abroad when and as it suited their purpose. The earnest and repeated advice of the Amban seemed therefore to them merely a confirmation of his statement, and a disquieting proof of the serious danger they were in. They left no stone unturned to spur their people on to harry those whom they called the English infidels of Hindustan. The men of Kams at first refused to leave their province to oppose our advance; they argued that they could not leave their own district unprotected, and, as the Dalai Lama's temporal authority over Kams is somewhat nebulous, he very wisely adjured them to assist him on the spiritual ground that the ultimate intention of the Mission was to wreck Buddhism.

The state of affairs in Lhasa at this time was desperate. The Emperor of China had ordered the Tibetans to negotiate with the Maharajah of Nepaul and the Tongsa Penlop, the temporal ruler of Bhutan; both had urged upon the Dalai Lama an immediate compliance with the British demands. No help was forthcoming from Russia, and, as a final blow, the good people of Nakchu-ka said with some firmness that the English had already killed many professional soldiers of the Tibetans, and how then could peaceable cattle-drivers like themselves fight against them? Rather

than come out they would go on pilgrimage. In these depressing circumstances, the Dalai Lama appears to have acted somewhat hurriedly, and, so far as can be gleaned, the Amban seems to have had a bad quarter of an hour with him. At any rate, upon his return through the green parks of Lhasa, which separate the Potala from the Residency, his cogitations took a definite shape, and the Viceroy of Tibet sent an urgent request to the Maharajah of Nepaul that a thousand Gurkhas should be sent at once for his protection.

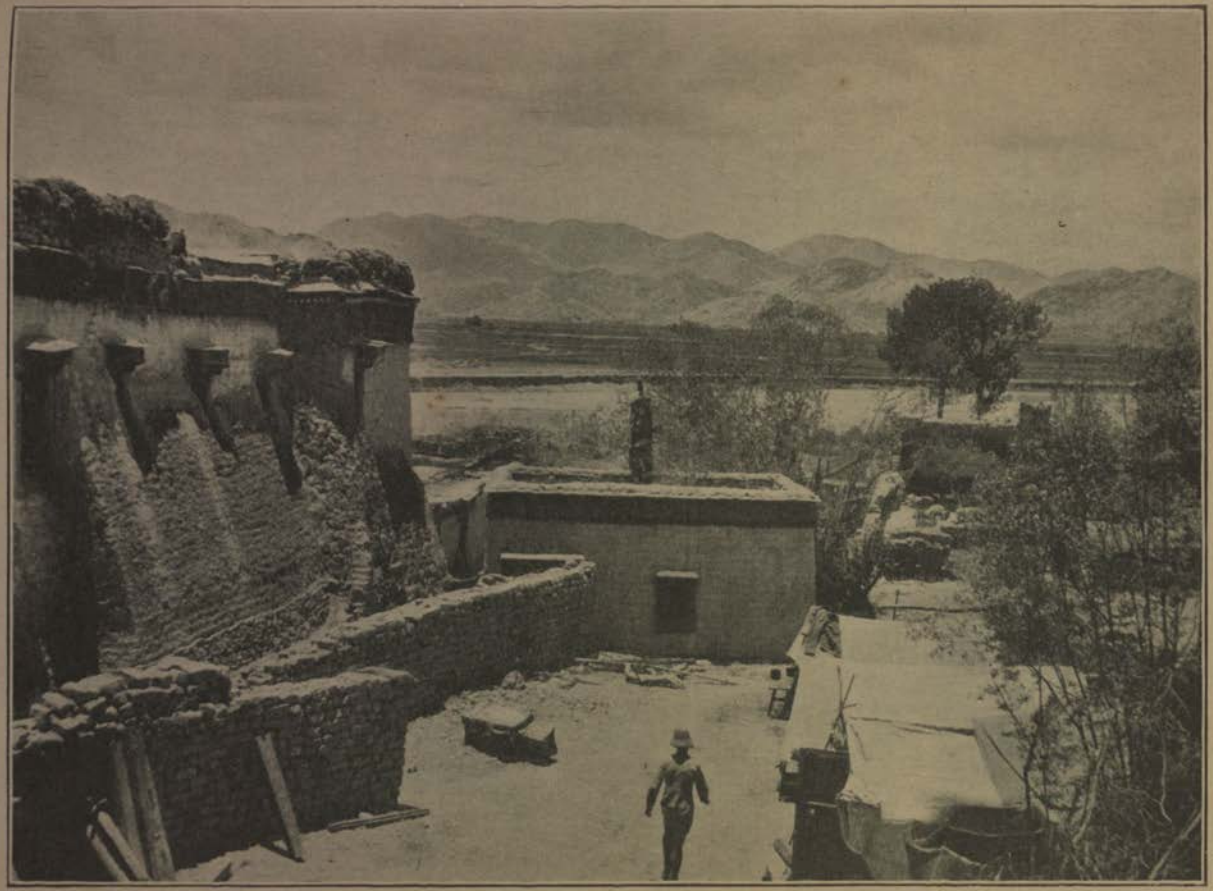
On the side of the Grand Lama also military preparations were pressed on. The construction of a fort at Chusul, forty miles from Lhasa, at the junction of the Kyi chu and the Tsang-po, was ordered. A new water-wheel, presumably for the purpose of turning a lathe, was set up in the arsenal, and, in utter need, the magic powers of the Sa-kya monastery, the hated representative of the older regime of divine tyrants, were called in, and the incantations and charms of the contemned Red Cap faith rose up for the first time from under the golden roofs of the Potala. Finally, two days after our arrival in Gyantse, the Tibetans had determined to rush our post by night and reoccupy the jong. This, as we have seen, had been attempted with partial success.

It will be clear that there was no real hope of conducting negotiations in Gyantse even before the morning of the 5th of May. After that uneventful moment, with the Tibetans all round us and the guns of the jong playing at their will upon the Commissioners' residence, negotiation was naturally farther off than ever. The determination of the Government to adhere to its policy of concession to Russian susceptibilities now crippled

Colonel Younghusband's right hand. The very Sikhs of the garrison came to hear of it, and said gloomily that unless this business were carried through as it should be and in Lhasa, they would never be able to hold up their heads again among their own folk at home. So long, however, as this bombardment lasted, so long as the Tibetans retained possession of the jong, negotiation on any basis whatever was in abeyance—except for Colonel Younghusband, whose weary pen again and again restated the position for the benefit of the Cabinet, scarcely one of whose members, with the exception of Lord Lansdowne, had even a bowing acquaintance with the East.

There is no doubt about it; in the East you must do as the East does, if you hope to achieve anything permanently good or permanently great in it. Had the two things been necessarily incompatible, the jettison of Lord Curzon's policy in order that Lord Cromer's goods should be safely brought to port might well have been accepted by everyone, and certainly would have been by every member of the Mission in Tibet. But it was believed that the two were not now incompatible, and it seemed to us unfortunate that the Government should not have realised that the condition of affairs had changed.

Meanwhile, the daily work of defence had to be done, and better provision had to be made for the mules whose old lines lay under the guns of the jong with scarcely a twig to protect them. They were given a more secure position in rear of the buildings. The abattis and horn-works were strengthened, the Gurkhas' gate was re-staked, wire entanglements surrounded the entire post, traverses rose up in every unprotected spot, the trees in the plantation to the rear were cleared away for



Chang-lo. The front wall of the Re uit. The river cliff is seen immediately beyond the trees. Captain Sheppard in foreground.

two hundred yards and the sentries were doubled. The accompanying map of the defence of Chang-lo will explain the general system adopted by Captain Ryder. It was subsequently slightly extended by Captain Sheppard, but the latter, on his arrival, found the place sufficiently secure to enable him to devote all his energies to the construction of bridges and covered ways between the main position and the outposts at the white house and Pala village, which had then been secured.

From day to day it became increasingly uncertain whether the little mail-bag, which was taken out every morning to be met at Sau-gang by the dak runners from Kang-ma, would ever reach its destination. Why the Tibetans did not effectually prevent this mail remains a mystery to this day. The bag was usually guarded by four mounted men only, and it had a long road to cover, by villages, from any of which the messengers might with impunity have been shot down; through defiles in which any ravine might well conceal a dozen determined men; or across the open plain, where its distant progress could be watched by a sharp-sighted man six miles away. Once or twice a faint-hearted attempt was actually made. On one occasion, May 20th, it was so far successful that the mounted infantry were obliged to make the best of their way into Chang-lo, leaving behind them one mail-bag and one of their number dead.*

The coming of the dak was the one incident that broke the monotony of our daily life. The telegraph wire was with us almost from the beginning, and only

* This dead man was the only one left in the hands of the Tibetans throughout the expedition. His head was afterwards found to have been hacked off, and sent to Lhasa to substantiate a claim to the grant of land offered by the Dalai Lama in return for every head of a member of the expedition.

once was there the slightest attempt to interfere with it on the part of the enemy. In this connection an incident may be noticed which reflects no small credit upon Mr. Truninger. He, so the story was told to me, with his second in command, was engaged in setting up posts and laying the wires along one portion of the road to the undisguised interest and curiosity of one or two innocent-looking lamas. These men persistently asked what was the use of the wire. It will be seen that this was, under the circumstances, an inquiry the true answer to which might prove disastrous to our communications. We had not the men to defend even ten miles of this long line, and without the slightest question the wire would have been cut in twenty places a day if the Tibetans had had the least idea of the enormous value it was to us. But the answer came simply and earnestly. "We English," said Truninger, "are in a strange land, a land of which no foreigner has ever known anything; our maps are no good, and every day we go forward we are like children lost in a great wood. Therefore we lay this wire behind us in order that when we have done our business with your Dalai Lama we may find the road by which we came and, as quickly as possible, get hence to England." Needless to say, nothing could more effectually have secured the wire from damage, as the single ambition of the Tibetans from the first was to be rid of us as quickly as possible.

The result of this forbearance on the part of the enemy was that we often received the news in the first editions of the evening papers in London before we sat down to dinner the same evening. In point of actual time we received such news within three hours of its publication, while the news which we sent westwards

at times reached London long before the nominal hour at which it had been despatched from Gyantse. Ordinarily, however, messages took about three hours apparent time, that is to say, eight or nine hours actual time, in reaching their destination in London.

Diaries of sieges are dull. There was always plenty to do, but it lacked distinction, although under other circumstances much of it would have been exciting enough. One day, or rather one night, there were water channels, supplying the town, to be cut or dammed; there was a patrol to be sent out, with the general intention of rendering night travelling unhealthy for the Tibetans; later on, there was a two-hundred-yard length of covered way to be made in the exposed plain. Another day some of the houses in the plain behind us, which the Tibetans were holding, had to be cleared of their occupants. Another time there was a bridge to be built beyond the end of the plantation, just within the furthest range of the jingals from the rock. These jingals generally gave the first intimation that the dak was arriving. Besides their regular morning bombardment, and one equally inevitable about half-past four, they reserved aim and ammunition for the dak riders, whom from their high eyrie they could easily see as they crossed the bridge and made their way through the trees of the plantation to the southern entrance of the post.* All day long there was something to be done; I spent the late afternoons in acquiring a smattering of Tibetan. The wind used to spring up daily about three o'clock, whirling a shower of catkins from the willows beside the wall of the Mission garden, and

* I do not think that a single man was ever hit in this way, but the amount of lead the Tibetans thus used was extraordinary.

driving a penetrating storm of grit through the post. Out across the plain, the long trails of smoke from the burning houses were dissipated into the low-lying blue haze of the distant hills, and added another glory to the sunset scene.

On the 19th of May it was decided to clear what was known afterwards as the Gurkha post. This was a white house 600 yards away from Chang-lo almost in the direction of the jong. The Tibetans had occupied it with sixty men, and it was imperative that they should at once be dislodged. Before dawn the storming-party, under Lieutenant Gurdon, moved out, followed by the Gurkhas of the garrison. The main doors of the house were blown in, and the place carried by assault in a quarter of an hour; our casualties were insignificant, and before the sun was well up the house was occupied by a single company of the attacking force, which remained in this exposed position during the remainder of our stay at Gyantse. Against this house the chief fury of the Tibetans was thenceforward directed; night after night it was surrounded and had to beat off the Tibetan forces. Day after day it was pounded by the guns on the jong, which here seemed to rise almost perpendicularly above the house. A wall was built up by the Tibetans from the westward corner of the jong towards the river, and from two embrasures in it a continual bombardment was kept up upon the defenders of the post. On the following day occurred the attack upon the mail escort, to which I have already referred. On this occasion Captain Ottley, who went out with the mounted infantry to the rescue of the dak runners, drove the Tibetans headlong from two farms, but found them so strongly ensconced about

four miles further on that he was himself obliged to retire, impeded by the necessity of escorting two wounded and five unmounted men.

On the 21st a small force moved out under Colonel Brander to clear the plain to the south ; they captured and burned three farms held by the enemy, and returned

Burning houses on Gyantse plain. The Tibetans had fired upon us from these farms.

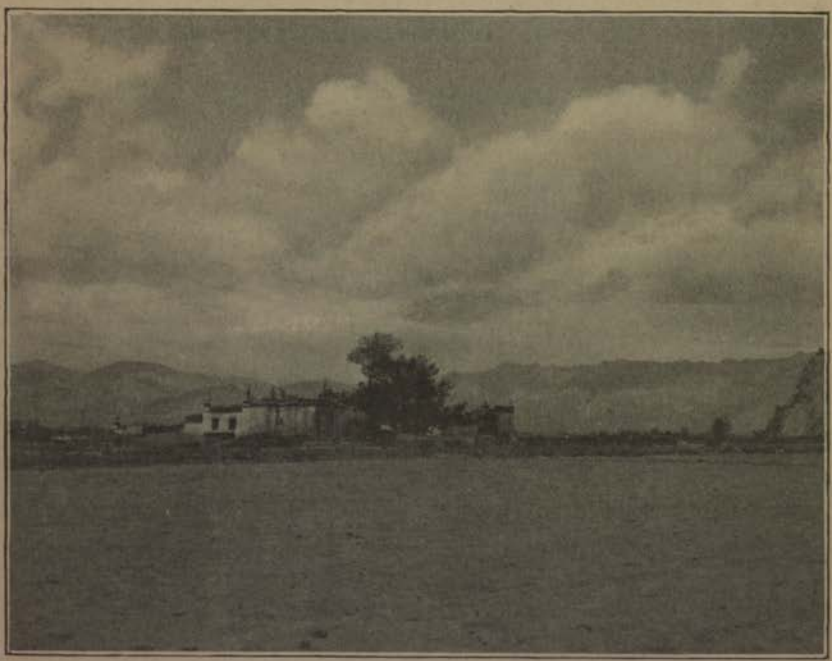
to camp on receiving a report that the enemy were moving out from Gyantse to attack Chang-lo. Colonel Brander did not allow the grass to grow under his feet, and five days later he swept the Tibetans from Pala village, the most important position that they held, except the jong itself.

The taking of Pala was one of the most creditable

bits of work done by the garrison. In utter darkness, before the dawn, Colonel Brander sent out a small column, composed of three hundred rifles, four guns, and a maxim. Their objective was this hamlet, where the Tibetans had been strengthening a position, and mounting guns for the previous two or three days. This danger at all costs had to be prevented. Pala enfiladed nearly the whole of our defences, and was barely 1,200 yards away to the north-east. The relative positions of Chang-lo, Pala and the jong were, roughly speaking, those of the points of an equilateral triangle; the road from Gyantse to Lhasa runs through Pala; and the occupation of this post gave us practical command of all direct communications with the capital. For more reasons than one the place had to be taken, and Colonel Brander's scheme was in its conception admirable. The guns were posted on an eminence, a quarter of a mile away to the north-east, which completely dominated the village. After skirting round the village to the south-east his plan was to develop an attack in the first place upon the house which was nearest to the jong. For this purpose Captain Sheppard and Captain O'Connor were deputed, with half-a-dozen men, to open the assault by blowing in the wall of the next house, which wholly commanded it. At the same time Lieut. Garstin with Lieut. Walker, R.E., were sent a few yards further to breach the house itself. Major Peterson, with two companies of the 32nd Pioneers, was to follow up the explosions with an instant rush. This was the plan; what actually happened was entirely different.

The column moved slowly through the darkness, until its leading ranks were within fifty yards of the high road to Lhasa. At that moment a small party

of three unsuspecting Tibetans tramped slowly along it, and though Colonel Brander believed that not one of his men was actually seen, it is possible that, in some way, these men were able to give the alarm to the defenders of the post. Certainly there seems to be no reason to charge any member of the attacking



Pala village from Chang-lo.

column with carelessness, or even an accident. But the Tibetans were on the alert, and, as soon as the first figures were visible in the obscurity, a hot fire was poured upon them from the roofs of all the houses in the village. The two storming-parties had by this time reached a low wall, thirty yards from the house to be attacked, and there was nothing else to be done but to make a dash for it. Captain Sheppard, followed

by Captain O'Connor, vaulted over the wall, and ran forward into the narrow lane between the two houses. From a doorway in the foremost house, opening into this passage, three Tibetans rushed out with matchlocks and swords. Captain Sheppard drew his revolver and shot two of them, set the cake of gun-cotton under the wall, and lit the fuse. He then ran back, preceded by the third Tibetan, who, however, escaped into the door again. At the same time, beside the smaller house, Garstin and Walker were setting up their explosive, and everything seemed to promise immediate success on the lines that Colonel Brander had mapped out. Garstin's fuse, however, refused to act, and only Sheppard's effected its purpose. An earth-shaking roar was followed by blinding dust, through which it was impossible to see the full extent of the damage done. But all firing ceased for the moment, and in one house at least a breach, big enough for the entrance of the supporting companies, had been made. No one came.

It appeared afterwards that Major Peterson's men had found it impossible to advance in the face of the fire from the houses, and instead of moving westward to the place from which they could carry out the work begun by the storming-parties, they took up a sheltered position to the east in a garden, where they remained until the well-directed fire of " Bubble " and " Squeak " enabled them to advance. The little storming-party was indeed also supported by a company of the same regiment on its flank, which had occupied a position in the sunken road a hundred yards from the house, and did not understand the dangers in which the two small bodies of men under Captain Sheppard were in a moment

placed. These men were thus entirely cut off, and both houses were full of Tibetans.

O'Connor acted with great presence of mind. He had his own cake of gun-cotton intact, and, by the merest chance, the door through which the surviving Tibetan had escaped back into the house was left unfastened. Attended by one Sikh only, O'Connor dashed through into the unoccupied house. Luckily every man in it was on the roof; for that very reason he considered it necessary to go up on to the first floor, in order more effectively to explode the charge. Followed by his companion, he dashed up the slippery iron-sheathed ladder, and set his cake in the corner where it would do most damage. The men on the roof had seen him, and in a rain of badly-aimed bullets he lighted the fuse and, to use his own phrase, "ran like a rabbit." His Sikh companion in his excitement caught his rifle, to which the bayonet was attached, between a wooden pillar and the hand-rail of the stairs, thus completely barring the descent. Fuses used by storming-parties are, naturally, short, and the stage directions for the descent of O'Connor and his man would have been "exeunt confusedly." Picking themselves up at the bottom they made for the door, which, however, they did not reach before the explosion took place. O'Connor never has given a very lucid description of the moment, but the fact that in his inside pocket a thick cut-glass flask was smashed to pieces by the shock shows that his escape was a narrow one indeed. Sheppard outside saw with horror half of one of the walls of the house subside in yellow dust before a sign of O'Connor was visible at the doorway.

Soon after this a second attempt of Garstin's was

more successful, but in the absence of any support, the position of the little storming-parties was dangerous indeed. Soon afterwards, as we were to hear with the deepest regret, Garstin was killed outright, and O'Connor was seriously wounded by a ball through the shoulder, before safe quarters could be taken up. In fact, these exposed sections suffered all the more serious casualties of the day, and in number no less than eight out of a total of eleven.

As soon as it was light enough, the guns on the little hill opened fire upon the still strongly-held houses to the east of the village, and Major Peterson showed great gallantry in bringing up his Pioneers through the gardens and houses, taking each by storm in turn. The fighting was severe, for with the rising of the sun, the Tibetans found themselves caught without the chance of escape. The jong lay 1,200 yards away, but to reach it fugitives were obliged to cross an entirely coverless plain. Their fellows in the town could be of little assistance to them. One plucky attempt on the part of a score of mounted men was, indeed, made, but the enterprise was hopeless; riding straight into the zone swept by the maxims, hardly three of them escaped back. Nor did the bombardment, which the jong opened at the first streak of light, help the defenders of the village. With an impartial hand the gunners showered their balls upon friend and foe alike, and to this cannonade some at least of the Tibetan casualties among the crowded houses of Pala must have been due. A stout defence against overwhelming odds was made for a short time; but as the morning wore on, the Tibetans abandoned their loop-holes and their windows, and fled to their labyrinth of underground cellars, where they

In the pleasure-grounds of the great house at Pala. The windows throughout the house were barricaded on the day we captured the place.

crouched in the darkness, and, with their matchlocks ready, formed a far more formidable antagonist than in the open air. The place was practically cleared by one o'clock, though for two or three days afterwards a considerable number of undiscovered Tibetans crept quietly away under cover of the darkness of the night.

In the centre of the village was a large and comfortable house, owned by the Pala family, one of the most aristocratic stocks in Tibet. Besides a well-built three-storied house, there was also the usual little summer-house beneath the trees of the garden. The excellent workmanship of the few things, such as tea-pots and brass images, which were found in the house gave proof of the luxury of its late occupants. A more significant find, however, was the discovery of two heavy jingals in the cellars. It is a little difficult to account for their presence. They had certainly not been brought there recently, and it is curious that the Tibetans in bringing guns even from Lhasa itself, for the purpose of bombarding our post, should have over-looked within a mile of Gyantse two pieces throwing a ball as heavy as those which they had laboriously transported from a distance. The larger of the two guns weighed over four hundred pounds, the diameter of its bore was three inches, and the outside was curiously fluted. It was made of gun-metal, and altogether seemed serviceable enough for the limited ballistic requirements of Tibetans.

The village was occupied by a detachment of the Pioneers, whose exploits were recognised in their Colonel's orders on the following day. It is perhaps a pity that the work of the storming parties did not receive acknowledgment, though the survivors of them, wounded or not,

were the last people to notice the omission. It was a good piece of work, and Colonel Brander is to be congratulated. The delay of even twenty-four hours in capturing this village might have made a serious difference to the defence of Chang-lo, and when the Tibetans had once been driven out the fullest use was made by us of this second *point d'appui*.

The situation created by the capture of Pala was briefly this: the English force was placed in a strong position with regard to the jong; we were enabled to cut the communications of the Tibetans eastwards, and, by holding the bridge at Chang-lo itself, communication with the south was only possible after the river had risen by going five miles down stream to the bridge at Tse-chen. We had for some time been able to keep the Tibetans under cover all the day; a few sharpshooters and Lieut. Hadow, with an itching thumb upon the trigger-lever of his maxim, had long made it impossible for any Tibetan to show himself by daylight on any part of the jong, or in so much of the town as was visible from the roof of the Commissioner's house. But we had hitherto of course been unable to stop steady communication with Lhasa by night. Now, however, we were astride the road, and an occasional patrol was all that was necessary to prevent the Tibetans holding any communication with their capital, except by the circuitous and difficult mountain track, which could only be followed by retreating thirty miles down the valley of the Nyang chu.

On our side we were still surrounded, and it was a daily uncertainty every morning whether our thin line of communications would have continued to exist through the night. We were therefore in a curious situation,

Gyantse jong from Chang-lo Bridge.

ONE HAD HARDLY THE QUIET NECESSARY FOR PAINTING A PICTURE, AS EVERY NOW AND THEN ONE OF THE SMALLER JINGALS WOULD BE LET OFF IN ONE'S DIRECTION. THE POST ITSELF WOULD JUST BE SEEN OFF THE SKETCH TO THE RIGHT BEHIND THE NEARER TREES.

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By the Author.

GYANTSE JONG FROM CHANG-LO BRIDGE.

Pala : putting the village into a state of defence.

either side besieging the other; and the word investment (which was generally used to describe our position) is not perhaps strictly accurate. The honours were pretty evenly divided; neither the Tibetans nor we were able to storm the others' defences; a mutual fusillade compelled each side to protect its occupants by an elaborate system of traverses; and straying beyond the narrow limits of the fortifications was, on either side, severely discouraged by the other. The Tibetans had, however, two considerable advantages. They were fighting in their own country, and in numbers they probably exceeded us by ten to one. For them, every village or house that dotted the wide plain round us was a refuge, and might also become a post from which to operate against us. The loss of a few men now and then mattered little to them; they had the whole of Tibet from which to make good their casualties, and from almost the same wide recruiting ground reinforcements crept in nightly in small companies. Sometimes in the past they had ventured in during the daylight, bent double, running from cover to cover like hares, now waiting for a quarter of an hour behind a friendly overhanging bank, now making quick time to the shelter of a white-washed chorten, or a ruined wall. But our success at Pala made a great difference to the relative positions of ourselves and the Tibetans, though our real danger—that of having our long indefensible line of communications broken—remained undiminished. London was, however, more pessimistic about our position than we were ourselves.

CHAPTER X.

LIFE IN THE BESIEGED POST.

At Gyantse, from dawn till sunset, there was generally a breeze. Except for an hour or two in the white heat of mid-day, the lightly-strung leaves of the branching Lombardy poplars in the compound were every moment shifting edge-ways to the faint indraught from the plain, and, over-head, the long strings of prayer flags, orange and faded grey and gauzy chrome, rocked gently in the stirring air. Silent the post never was by day, not even in the motionless glare of noontide when the wind was stifled and the heat sweated out from the wide empty plains a teeming mirage veil. These were the hours which the shrill whistle of the kite, or the monotone of the hoopoe filled—hours when the petty restlessness of a camp, even in the hour of siesta, assumed ear-compelling importance. Never during the day could one hear the faint rush and race of the Nyang chu over its pebbles a hundred yards away. At night there was no other sound.

Gyantse under the stars will remain an impressive memory for everyone in the little post at Chang-lo. Perhaps the picture of the nights there is worth giving so far as one can. Close behind the fortified parapet of the Commissioner's house the trees stood up with their sable branches sharply etched against the powdered spaces of the night sky. One had to look

upwards at them to be sure that it was not, indeed, their rustling, but the voice of the river that hushed the silence and was itself muted by the distant bark of a dog or the lifted heel-chain of a restless mule in the lines below. Far behind, straightly ascending like a column of phosphorescent smoke, the Milky Way ribbed the sky to the south-south-west. Beneath it, the heavy sloping buttress of the Reduit stood out boldly, the outer angle cutting sharply across the line of the river as it flowed westwards in its shadowy channel, only a little brighter than the sky, till a curve carried it behind the thin fringe of sallows, where all day the rosefinches chattered in a crowd.

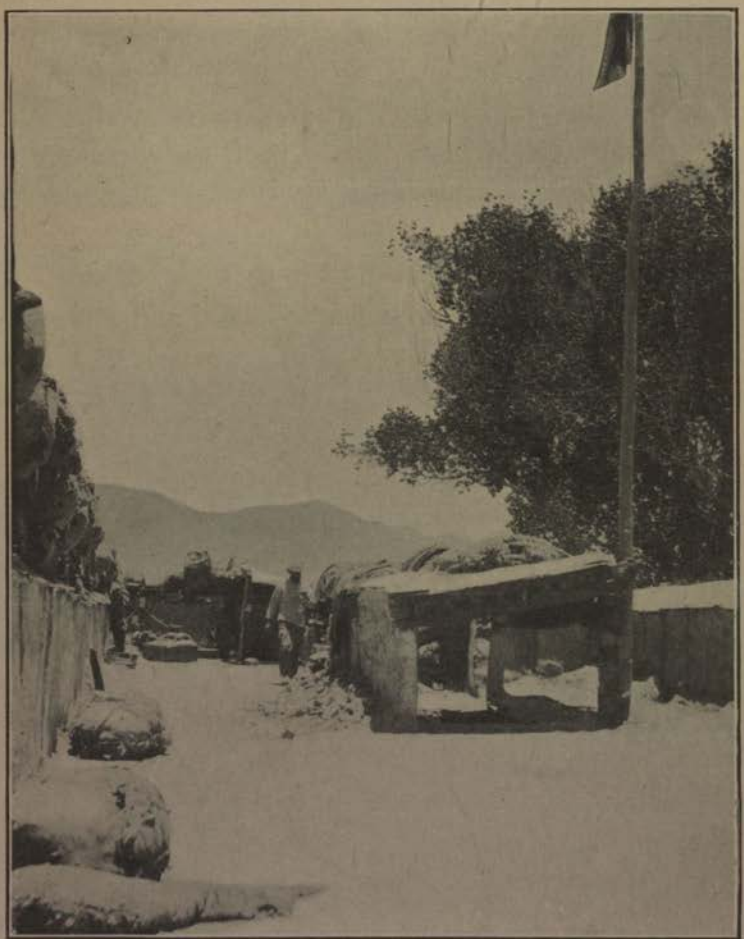
Looking downwards over the sand-bags, the thick tangle of the nearest abattis is barely seen, and beyond it the plain is only certainly broken by an acre patch of iris, or by the darkness under a clump of trees. These, uncertain in the gloom below, are blackly silhouetted above, over the outline of the distant hills which are clear against the sky of the horizon round ; for in these pure altitudes the stars invisibly assert themselves, and inter-stellar space has a half-latent illumination of its own, against which the peaks and saddles of these Himalayan spurs are better defined than on a moonlight night. At the end of the parapet is a sheeted maxim, and beside its muzzle the motionless sentry looks out into the night towards the jong. All day long the high rock and its forts, clean cut in the bright air, have towered up against the ash and ochre of the distant mountains, scored and scarred with sharp water channels, cut fan-wise by a thousand of the brief rains of these high uplands. Six hours ago every stone of it could be counted ; now it had vanished and the blank

levels run to the foot of the distant ranges. Other familiar things but a few yards away—a worn foot-path, a clay drinking-trough, or a half up-rooted tree-stump—have vanished with the jong. Pala village is faintly betrayed in the distance by its whitened walls, but even of that there is no certainty. Six hundred yards to the front the position of the Gurkha Post is only distinguished by the trees which cut the sky line over it.

As one peers out into the warm night, a long monotone is faintly droned from the darkness ahead. It is one of the huge conch shells in the jong and it may only mean a call to prayer—the "hours" of Lamaism are unending—but as the moaning note persists softly and steadily, a vivid speck of flame stabs the darkness across the river. A second later the report of the gun accompanies a prolonged "the-e-es" overhead. There is another and another, and the balls chase each other through the trees. The Tibetans are out for the night A heavy fire breaks out for two or three hundred yards along the further bank, the neater crack of the European rifles in their possession blending with the heavy explosion of matchlocks an inch in bore, and the malicious swish of the conical bullets with the drone of leaden lumps.

The sentry moves inwards shadow-like and rouses an officer sleeping in a corner of the parapet. It is only a word or two, "Water-gate, sir." As the fire increases, the garrison, a ghostly company of half-seen men, move silently and mechanically to their posts from their beds behind the traverses. After a little, the officer of the watch comes round and one hears a few whispered words in the compound below. But

this has happened so often, night after night, that there is not much to do; the defences are manned without question needed or answer given. A minute or two



The Quarter-deck at Chang-lo. Lieut. Hadow's maxim and tent at the end. A Gurkha sentry on the left is looking through the sand-bags to the jong, from which a jingal ball is fired now and then.

later there is hardly a change to be noted in the quietness of the post, except for the wail of the bullets overhead, and the occasional inevitable cough of the

awakened Sepoys. But the post is ready from end to end, and the officer at his maxim traverses her snub muzzle once or twice to see that she runs easily.

The conch drones again from the hidden jong. Nothing is easier now than to people the darkness with creeping figures. One seems to have seen them—one always seems too late actually to see them—here and there in the obscurity, but the small force betraying its front by the flashes across the river is the only certain thing. These men keep up a persistent but useless fire, though not a shot is returned. The spots of flame jerk out of the night along a widening front, but there is no sign of an advance, and, failing to draw any response from us, the aimless fusillade slackens after a time. From the enemy's position, Chang-lo must seem a sleeping, almost a deserted, post. But the Tibetans have been taught a severe lesson time after time, and they will not easily come on. Two or three, indeed, of their hardiest come right up to the other side of the bridge and, at a range of sixty yards, fire straight into the mud walls of the water-gate. There is a rifle muzzle out of every loop-hole that commands the bridge, of which the seven sagging bays may just be seen against the dim stream from a corner of the Reduit. But not a sound of life is betrayed. The Tibetan "braves" fire half-a-dozen shots along the roadway and then go back to urge on their reluctant followers. There is a momentary increase in the firing, but the sparks of flame have not moved up a yard, and the faint sound dies down again into silence. It is difficult to convince oneself that anything has happened, so completely has the night swallowed up everything except the chuckle of the river over its stones.

After a lull of twenty minutes it is clear that no attack is to be brought, at least against the central post. There was perhaps no real intention on the part of the Tibetans to follow up their volleys; we are much too strong and they know it; their real object is disclosed as we watch. Round the detached Gurkha posts the darkness is suddenly pierced by a hundred tongues of flame, and upon the rattle of the muskets, a babel of excited shouting follows. The enemy have surrounded the house. Again and again the Tibetan war-cry is caught up. It is like nothing in the world so much as the quick and staccato yell of a jackal pack, and it carries for two miles on a still night. One from another the Tibetans take up the weird cadences in an uprising falsetto, reviving and again reviving the hubbub whenever there seems any chance of its dying down. But the Gurkha house is mute, though its walls re-echo with the din. Then the Tibetans adopt another course. Shouting together in groups, they pour forth challenges and contempt upon the little garrison of forty or fifty Gurkhas. One or two swaggerers come up within fifty yards of the very loopholes and scream out a flood of foul abuse. There is never a word or a shot in reply, and the braves retire. The fire re-opens and the enemy advance a little. Even the most timid Tibetan takes heart and looses off his piece a little less wildly.

Inside the post, the Gurkhas stand aside in the darkness beside their loopholes, through which a bullet whizzes every now and then, burying itself in the mud wall opposite. Two men keep watch for the rest, and Mewa, the jemadar, bides his time till he has word from them. The war-cry breaks out again, rising and

falling like the bellowing falsetto of the mules' lines at feeding time, and the Tibetans grow confident and move forward, until a dim ring of them can just be seen from inside the post. The fire re-doubles, and a Gurkha is hit in the neck, but still there is not a sign of life about the house. The excitement of watching this attack from the roof of the post is as fresh to-night as if it were the first time we were seeing one.

There must be about a thousand of the enemy. From Chang-lo we can hear them chattering and shrieking together, keeping their courage up with noise. One thinks of the fate that awaits every soul in that little garrison should they be caught unawares some night, and one blesses the foolishness of the noisy Tibetans.

But the time is almost ripe. Mewa takes the place of one of his watchmen and looks down keenly through the dark. After a while, he is reluctantly convinced that the enemy cannot be induced to come forward again for some time, and he knows that the strain on his men has become severe. There is suddenly a movement among twenty or thirty Tibetans; they move round almost out of sight for a rush at the stake-protected door. From the parapet, we can hear a quick double whistle. It is the awaited signal, for the Gurkha post will risk no storming party.

In a moment there is pandemonium. From every window and loophole, and from between the sand-bags and through the crevices on the roof, a burst of maxim-like fire is poured into the misty ring of men, which envelops the building, and the air aches with the incessant snap of the rifle and the very short scream of the bullet. In another moment all is over. The

Tibetans have broken and are flying into the night, leaving five or six dead behind them. Their road back to the jong lies flat and free before them, and they never look back. The maxim fire has stopped as suddenly as it had begun. Silence falls upon everything as before. Only the first rays of the rising moon strike full upon the upper terraces and towers of the jong and the mass of it emerges from the distant darkness edged with silver and strangely near. It is still some two hours before sun-rise, but as the moon frees herself from behind the hills to the east, the first faint ripple stirs the leaves overhead, and the silence of the night is lost.

After the sun had risen the day became monotonous, and the monotony was repeated daily, from week's end to week's end. Even the poor interest of watching the first appearance of the vegetables in the garden palled. There was a day when nine little green points promised nine bean plants to come. Day after day added two or three to this number, but after the appearance of thirty-eight, there was not only a cessation of further evidence of fertility, but a lamentable check in the development of the plants already above ground. At one time the peas, two little square plots planted with a generosity of seed which would have scandalised Messrs. Sutton, arose in ranks almost in a single night, and a few days afterwards were about three inches in height. Captain Walton, to whose hands the mission had entrusted this responsible duty, assured us that all was going well. Both the beans and peas were, he assured us, of a dwarf variety. Indeed, he seemed to suggest, with apparent self-conviction, that had these two plots exhibited any further intention of

growth he would have despaired of the dishes we were looking forward to. The carrots made no attempt to justify their credit, except in a prodigious growth of green feathery leaves. To them, and to the radishes, one fault was common. Where one expected to find the best part, a thin leather-bootlace-like root descended weedily into our carefully prepared loam. Nor, so far as I was ever able to ascertain, was a single dish of any vegetable, except mustard-and-cress, produced from our carefully-tended and certainly Eve-less garden.

There was very little to do from morn to night. Captain Ryder planned the defences of the post. Construction and demolition were alike in his hands; and the ultimate result of his care and technical skill was quaintly embodied one day by Colonel Brander in a sentence in the orders. *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice.* The original phrase referred, indeed, to a structure which served as a tomb, nor perhaps was the quotation strictly accurate, but Colonel Brander's intention was delightfully clear, and every soul in the garrison of each one of the many races there represented most cordially echoed the phrase. The plan of the defences, which will be found opposite page 336, shows the general arrangement of the traverses and earthworks. Of course, the direction from which most danger was to be expected was that of the jong. Every morning and every afternoon the usual bombardment broke out. It is possible that the Tibetans had secured some knowledge of the hours during which, from one reason or another, there was generally more movement inside the post than at other times. The free intercourse which the Tibetan visitors to Kamba-jong enjoyed must, at least, have

taught them something of our habits, and, without doubt, they made whatever use they could of this information. We early received news that the Téling Kusho was directing operations. He had been allowed to see a good deal of us at Kamba.

There was one thing in connection with this bombardment which may throw some light upon the ability of beleaguered garrisons in old days to hold their own until starvation compelled them to surrender. The fact that the report of a gun of an ancient pattern invariably precedes the ball was, we found, of the most invaluable assistance. There was always time to go four yards at least under cover of the nearest traverse before the ball crashed into the compound. There was one jingal, however, which was christened "Chota Billy," which only allowed three yards and in extreme cases of overcharge of powder only two. The naming of the bigger guns mounted on the jong was curious. From a large jingal, throwing a ball four inches in circumference, and immediately receiving the name of Billy, two Chota Billies, one big Billy, and finally two Williams successively took their names. In all, there may have been at most nineteen guns mounted on the jong, of a bore ranging from one inch to three and three-quarters inches. All of them ranged easily some two or three hundred yards beyond Chang-lo. William, the heaviest of all, would sometimes kick up the dust 600 yards in our rear, and 2,400 yards from the jong; that is to say, from 800 to 1,000 yards beyond the post was the utmost range of any gun, except one of the two Chota Billies, which at a pinch could reach the bridge at the end of the wood 2,800 yards from the gun positions of the rock.

But most of their missiles fell short. The ground immediately in front of Chang-lo was scarred and seamed with hundreds and even thousands of futile jingal balls which had dropped uselessly into the " football field " or the field outside. Only eight or ten of their best weapons threw projectiles with accuracy and certainty. The others heaved their muzzles up into the sky and trusted that elevation would counteract economy of powder and the amazing escape of gas all round the ill-fitting bullet. The bigger guns made an astonishing report, and a second and a half later a lump of lead from William, as big as a Tangerine orange, would moan through the air, sometimes with unpleasant accuracy, whipping down into the compound, or sometimes tearing its way through the high trees over our heads. Altogether about four men were killed by these misshapen projectiles, which looked like sections of a solid lead bar with the edges roughly filed down. At first lead alone was used, but the appearance among us of balls composed of a heavy stone wrapped with lead suggested that the supply was running short. Later on, this surmise was justified, for a curious substitute for lead was found in the use of pure copper. During the last two weeks of the siege lumps of this glittering red-gold metal were used almost as constantly as those of more humble material.

At one time the Tibetans adopted the principle of firing volleys. At a given signal fourteen or fifteen guns were fired in a ragged *feu de joie*. There was little additional danger to us even from the first of these concerted pieces, and it is clear that to follow such a volley by another, three minutes afterwards, was sheer waste of ammunition. Still, almost everything in the post

which could be struck was struck. Tents, sand-bags, traverses, house-walls, and trees were pounded alike. The trees suffered most; the Tibetans never seemed to be perfectly certain of the direction of any ball unless it betrayed its billet a hundred yards in front of our defences. Naturally, therefore, in order at least to

Inside Chang-lo post: the Mission quarters to the right and the Reduit to the left.

ensure that no such obvious failure of aim should be noted against them by the Commandant, they preferred to elevate their guns at an angle which often only resulted in a shower of twigs and leaves from the lofty poplars over our heads.

In those trees the kites whistled and the ravens croaked all day. Both species were twice the size of ravens and kites elsewhere. Captain Walton would

not admit that this enormous difference in size justified him in setting them down as a new species, but the practical results of having these double-powered scavengers probably contributed in no small degree to our comfort. Outside our defences the unclaimed pi-dogs roamed all day and howled nearly all the night. By day they were probably engaged in unearthing the long-buried limbs of some wretched Tibetan killed during the attack upon the post on May 5th. By night they seemed to be disputing among themselves the possession of the disgusting spoils they had secured during the day. At one time Colonel Brander arranged for the destruction of some scores of these parasites. But this was found to be a somewhat dangerous proceeding when carried out within half a mile of the camp. Two charges of attempted assassination were brought by a person of no small importance in the post, and, though these cases were smilingly dismissed, there was undoubtedly a certain element of danger in permitting this indiscriminate dog-slaughter with rifles which were capable of inflicting serious harm at a range of 4,000 yards. So the dogs were permitted to grout in the ground as they liked, and as a set-off against the intolerable nuisance of their howls by night, it was remembered that they might perhaps thereby give us useful warning of any second attempt on the part of the Tibetans to creep up in the darkness of a moonless night.

Of the dogs within the defences " Tim " was perhaps the best known, and certainly in his own eyes the most important. He was an Irish terrier belonging, so far as any dog very certainly belonged to anyone there, to Captain Cullen, but the members of the Mission,

making a contemptible use of the few occasional tit-bits which were found in their mess-boxes, successfully seduced him away from his true allegiance for some time. Of other dogs mention must be made of "Mr. Jackson," a little beauty of an Irish terrier, who we were assured enjoyed every minute of his life in spite of a permanently dislocated shoulder. He undoubtedly limped, and he even more certainly enjoyed life; but we could not help hoping that some mistake had been made in the diagnosis of his complaint. "Major Wimberley," a fearsome hound, had undoubtedly bull-dog and fox-terrier as his chief ingredients, but it was difficult finally to exclude his claims to any other breed of dog, except perhaps a greyhound or Pekinese pug. I do not remember what the real name of this entirely attractive dog was, but he used to go, on the below-stairs principle, by his master's name, and I am sorry that no photograph I possess seems to include his sober countenance. "The Lama" was a snarling, bad-tempered little beast, who produced a litter of pups of such appalling vulgarity and ugliness that, in spite of the real need which we then had of the companionship of even an animal, they were drowned by her native owner without a protest from anyone.

To many it may seem unnecessary, and perhaps silly, to make even this passing reference to the dogs that shared our captivity. But without going more deeply into the matter, I would only say that a critic should experience even the slight investment which it was our lot to undergo before he speaks slightingly of the right of a dog to grateful recollection.

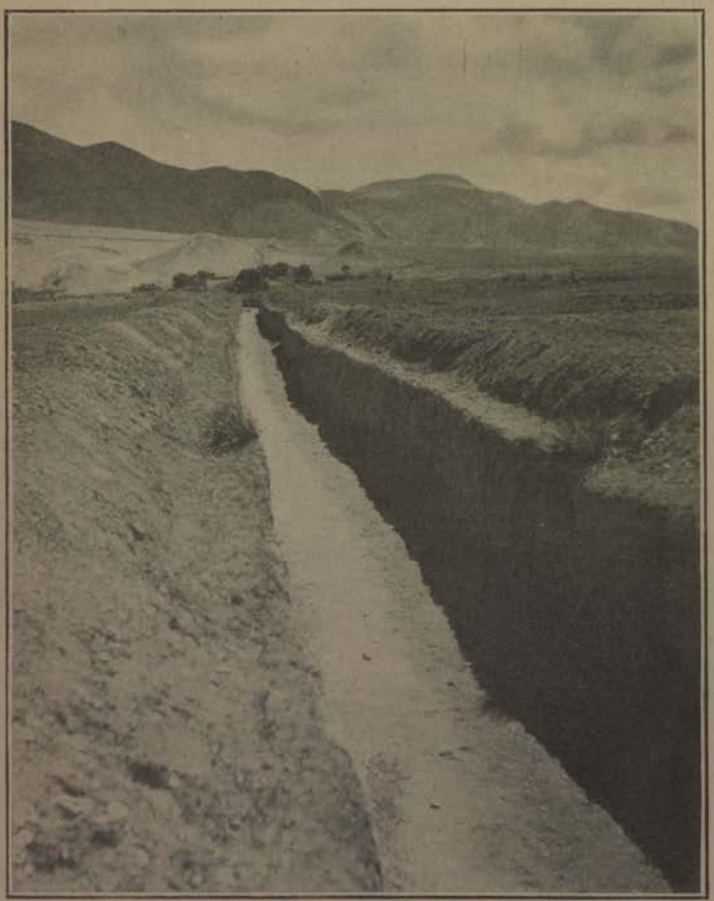
For the rest, one day succeeded another without change, and except for the uncertainty of the arrival of

the daily post, without variety. There was little actual danger, but we were of course restricted to the narrow limits of the defended posts for the greater part of the time of the investment. Towards the end, when we had secured and were holding Pala village and the Gurkha post, and after Sheppard had constructed his covered ways between us and them, more exercise was possible. But for the greater part of the time we could not stray beyond our own perimeter, and that in itself became somewhat of a burden. Perhaps the want of exercise contributed in no small degree to the irritation caused by this sense of captivity, but whatever the cause, an observant man might at times have noticed a slight tendency towards what we believe was called in Ladysmith, "siege temper." In fact, with the exception—and in justice I must say the absolute exception—of Colonel Younghusband himself and Captain Sheppard, there was hardly anyone in the little force who was entirely free from a touch of this pardonable frailty.

It is a pity that there were not more men with the force who were able to sketch. The most rudimentary skill in colour would have found scope indeed at Gyantse. As it was, there was hardly a paint-box in the force, if we except the little old-fashioned cakes of colour which officially provide for the sappers the reds and greys and ochres needed for their plans. However, even had there been more skill and better equipment, there would have been little time for the mere work of the artist. It is perhaps worth while to try to catch in words a little of what the finest photograph must fail utterly to record.

The colour of Tibet has no parallel in the world. Nowhere, neither in Egypt, nor in South Africa, nor even

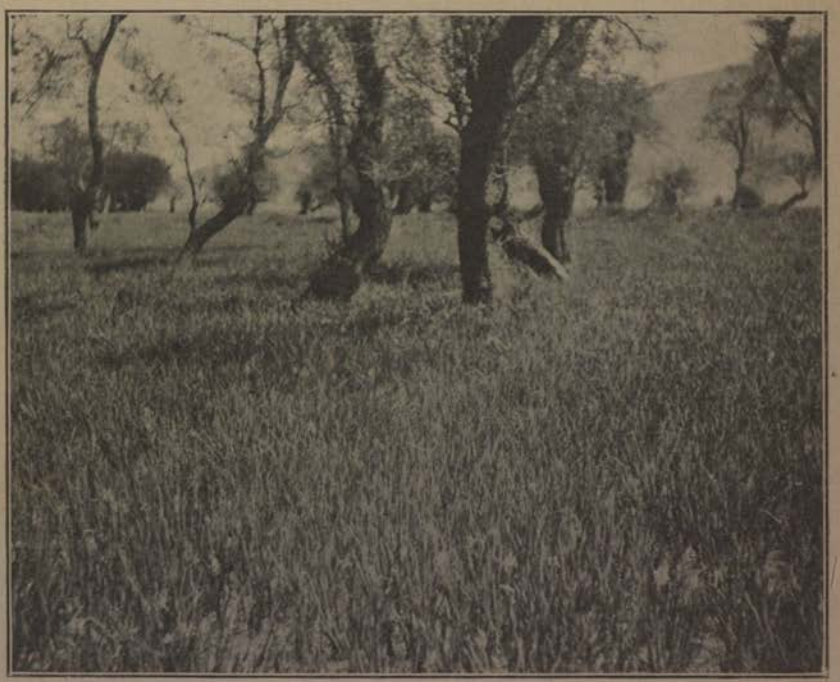
in places of such local reputation as Sydney, or Calcutta, or Athens, is there such a constancy of beauty, night and morning alike, as there is in these fertile plains inset in the mountain backbone of the world. Here there is a



The covered way constructed by Captain Sheppard between Chang-lo and Pala.

range and a quality in both light and colour which cannot be rendered by the best of coloured plates, but which must always be remembered if the dry bones of figure and fact are to be properly conceived.

During the mid-hours of a summer day, Tibet is perhaps not unlike the rest of the dry tropical zone. Here, as elsewhere, the fierce Oriental sun scares away the softer tints, and the shrinking and stretching shadows of the white hours are too scanty to relieve the mirage and the monotony. All about Chang-lo the con-



The iris plantation at Chang-lo.

temptuous shoulders of the shadeless mountains stand blank and unwelcoming. All along the plain as far as the eye can see the stretches of iris or barley and the plantations of willow-thorn are dulled into eucalyptus grey by the dust; the trees lift themselves dispirited, and the faint droop of every blade and every leaf tires the eye with unconscious sympathy. Far off along the

Shigatse road a pack-mule shuffles along, making in sheer weariness as much dust as the careless hoofs of a bullock, that dustiest of beasts. One does not look at the houses. The sun beats off their coarse and strong grained white-wash, and one can hardly believe that they are the same dainty buildings of pearl-grey or rose-pink that one watched as they faded out of sight with the sunset yesterday evening. Everything shivers behind the crawling skeins of mirage. There is no strength, there are no outlines to anything in the plain, and even the hard thorn trees in the plantation are flaccid. As one passes underneath them a kite or two dives downward from the branches. He will disturb little dust as he moves, for your kite mistrusts a new perch, and the bough he sits on must be leafless both for the traverse of his outlook, and for the clear oarage of his wide wings. Also, you may be sure he has been to and fro fifty times to-day. See him settle a hundred yards away near that ugly significant heap of dirty maroon cloth, and mark the dust thrown forward by the thrashing brake-stroke of his great wings. It hangs in a petty cloud still when we have come up to him and driven him away in indignation for a little space.

Under foot the dwarf clematis shuts in from the mid-day heat its black snake-head flowers, and the young shoots of the jasmine turn the backs of their tender leaflets to the sun, drooping a little as they do so. Veronica is there in stunted little bushes ; vetches, rest-harrows, and dwarf indigo-like plants swarm along the sides of the long dry water channels ; and here and there, where the ditch runs steep, you may find, along towards the southern face, what looks for all the world like a thickly-strewn bank of violets. Violets of course they

are not, but the illusion is perfect, in colour, growth, and size alike. Near them tall fresh-looking docks have found a wet stratum deep below the dusty irrigation cut, and away in a sopping water meadow by the river stunted Himalayan primulas make a cloudy carpet of pink.

Looking westwards from Gyantse jong. The Shigatse road lies across the plain to the right beyond the monastery wall.

Late in the afternoon the change begins. Details of flowers and fields and trees vanish—and surely one is content to lose them in the scene that follows. First, the light pall of pure blue which has all day gauzed over the end of the valley towards Dongtse deepens into ultramarine ash. Then, in a few minutes as it seems, the fleeces of white and silver in the west have gathered

The Iris Wood at Gyantse.

THIS PICTURE EXPLAINS ITSELF. NOTICE, HOWEVER, THE ENORMOUS KITES IN THE BRANCHES OF THE DISTANT TREES. *Dark green, flowers lavender and lemon, trunk black, hard blue sky.*

THE IRIS WOOD AT GYANTSE.

weight, and a mottled company of argent and silver-grey and cyanine heaps itself across the track of the setting sun. The sky deepens from blue to amber without a transient tint of green, and the red camp-fires whiten as the daylight fades. But the true sunset is not yet. After many minutes comes the sight which is perhaps Tibet's most exquisite and peculiar gift: the double glory of the east and west alike, and the rainbow confusion among the wide waste of white mountain ranges.

For ten minutes the sun will fight a path clear of his clouds and a luminous ray sweeps down the valley, lighting up the unsuspected ridges and blackening the lurking hollows of the hills. This is no common light. The Tibetans themselves have given it a name of its own, and indeed the gorse-yellow blaze which paints its shadows myrtle-green underneath the deepened indigo of the sky defies description and deserves a commemorative phrase for itself alone. But the strange thing is still to come. A quick five-fingered aurora of rosy light arches over the sky, leaping from east to west as one gazes overhead. The fingers converge again in the east, where a growing splendour shapes itself to welcome them on the horizon's edge.*

Then comes the climax of the transformation scene. While the carmine is still over-arching the sky, on either side the horizon deepens to a still darker shade, and the distant hills stand out against it with uncanny sharpness, iridescent for all the world like a jagged and translucent scale of mother-of-pearl lighted from behind. Above them the ravines and the ridges are alike lost, and in their place mantles a pearly underplay of rose-petal pink

* Travellers have more than once referred to this curious phenomenon, and the Tibetans have a word, "Ting-pa," for this rosy and cloudless beam also.

and eau-de-nil green, almost moving as one watches. Then the slowly developed tints tire and grow dull; the quick evening gloom comes out from the plain, and a sharp little wind from the south-east is the herald of the stars.

These sunsets are as unlike the "cinnamon, amber, and dun" of South Africa as the high crimson, gold-flecked curtains of Egypt, or the long contrasting belts of the western sky in mid-ocean. So peculiar are they to this country that they have as much right to rank as one of its characteristic features as Lamaic superstition, or the "bos grunniens" itself; and to leave them unmentioned, however imperfect and crude the suggestion may be, would be to cover up the finest page of the book which is only now after many centuries opened to the world. That alone is my excuse for attempting what every man in this expedition knows in his heart to be impossible.

CHAPTER XI.

SUPERSTITION : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS : ART.

In Tibet the line of division between the layman and the priest is sharply drawn indeed. The domestic life of the country, its government, its cultivation and even, in some degree, its commerce, all are coloured to a greater or less extent by the strange religion centred in the divine person of the Grand Lama of Lhasa ; and the line of honourable demarcation, so far as persons are concerned, permits of no mistake. If a man is a layman he belongs to an inferior caste; however high his rank he does but the more point the contrasts which exist between the rulers and the ruled. The Lamaic hierarchy have succeeded in creating a religious caste unparalleled in the world.

What that religion is, demands therefore more than a passing notice. There is, or rather there has hitherto been, a belief that the Buddhism of Tibet is a lawful descendant of the Buddhism which the Master preached beneath the pepuls of Bengal. Extravagant it was known to be ; it was obvious that it had become encrusted in ritual, and both adorned and humbled by traditions ; it was clear also that for the common folk the letter had almost killed the spirit, and the use by the priests of their sacred position to secure entire tyranny over the laymen had not escaped notice. But after all, the same things, each and all of them in some

form or another, are to-day true of Christianity also. And yet the flame of Christianity, however strange or tawdry the shrine, burns perhaps as steadily to-day as ever it did. This ever-ready parallel—one which the student carries with him almost unconsciously to the consideration of Buddhism—has obscured the truth.

But the Buddhism of Tibet has no longer the faintest resemblance to the plain austere creed which Gautama preached. It is doubtful if the great Founder of Buddhism would recognise in its forms or formulæ any trace of the purity and sobriety of his own high creed. It is hard to say whether he would be more offended by the golden cooking-pots of the Potala Palace or by the awful self-mortification of the immured monks of Nyendé-kyi-buk and other extreme hermitages. Except in so far as that Buddha's face of quietism personified still gazes down from wall and altar upon the rites of Lamaism, his religion can claim little connection with the faith upon which their reputation and power are wholly based. Under a thin mask of names and personifications suggested by the records of the Master, or by the reforms effected by Asanga, a system of devil-worship pure and simple reigns in Tibet; the monkish communities spare no effort to establish their predominance more firmly every year by fostering the slavish terror which is the whole attitude towards religion of the ignorant classes of the land. The wretched tiller of the soil is always the ultimate supporter of a religious tyranny, because in a manufacturing community the faculties, and a sense of independence, are necessarily developed too strongly for its toleration; but of all such superstitious servitudes the unhappy "miser" of Tibet supplies us to-day with the classical example.

Not even the darkest days of the Papal States, nor the most bigoted years of Puritan rule in New England, not the intolerance of Genevan Calvinism, not Islam itself can afford an example of such utter domination by an abuse of the influence upon men of their religious terrors. The line between religion and superstition may be a fine one and hard to place. But wherever it may be drawn the Buddhist of Tibet has long crossed it.

From a political point of view, the importance of the religion of any country lies less in its moral or ethical excellence than in the extent to which it exerts a real influence upon the lives of its professing members and in the use or misuse of that influence in the government of the country. Apart, therefore, from the actual doctrine or ritual of this so-called Buddhism, the degree to which it enters into the public and private life of the Tibetans is worth studying. It may be said at once that, so far at least as the lower classes are concerned, it is paramount: no other influence is of the slightest importance. But whether that influence deserves to be called religious is another matter. The distinction between northern and southern Buddhism is one which is far more than geographical. The common people of Burma and Siam still apply the standards of Gaya to their daily life, but northern Buddhism has long abandoned, except in name, the Indian faith. In their vain repetitions and mechanical aids to self-salvation, in their gaudy and frequently obscene ritual, in their hells full of demon spirits and fearsome semi-gods, Buddha's simple creed has long been dead. The doctrine of reincarnation, rather implied than taught by him, is still politically useful, and therefore remains as almost the sole link which still connects the two Churches. Brushing aside

the films of ritual and the untruthful suggestions of tradition, one finds in Lamaism little but sheer animistic devil-worship. I shall return to this subject later.

To the Tibetans, every place is peopled with the active agents of a supernatural malice. Always in this country—at the summit of a pass, at the entrance of a village, at a cleft in the rock-side, at the crossing of a stream by bridge or ford—one is accustomed to find the flicker of a rain-washed string of flags, a fluttering prayer pole, or a gaily decked brush of ten-foot willow sprigs; evil spirits must be exorcised at every turn in the road. Wells, lakes and running streams also are full of demons who visit with floods and hailstorms the slightest infraction of the lamas' rules. Tibet is peopled with as many bogeys as the most terrified child in England can conjure up in the darkness of its bed-room. A natural cave, a chink beneath a boulder, a farmstead, the row of willows beside an irrigation channel, or the low mill house at the end of them, a doorway or a chorten—every habitation of man teems with these unseen terrors. The spilling of the milk upon the hearth-stone needs its special expiation, and the birth and death of men are naturally perhaps made the opportunity of securing oblations from the people of the land. For there is but one way of exorcising these powers of ill. Prayers are not of themselves the defences of the poor in Tibet; they can only be lively and effectual when sanctioned by the priest; and the fluttering prayer-flag, the turning-wheel, or the muttered ejaculation is valid only after due consultation at the local gompa. And not a pole is set up, not a string of flags pulled taut, not a water-wheel or a wind-wheel set in motion without the payment of the cus-

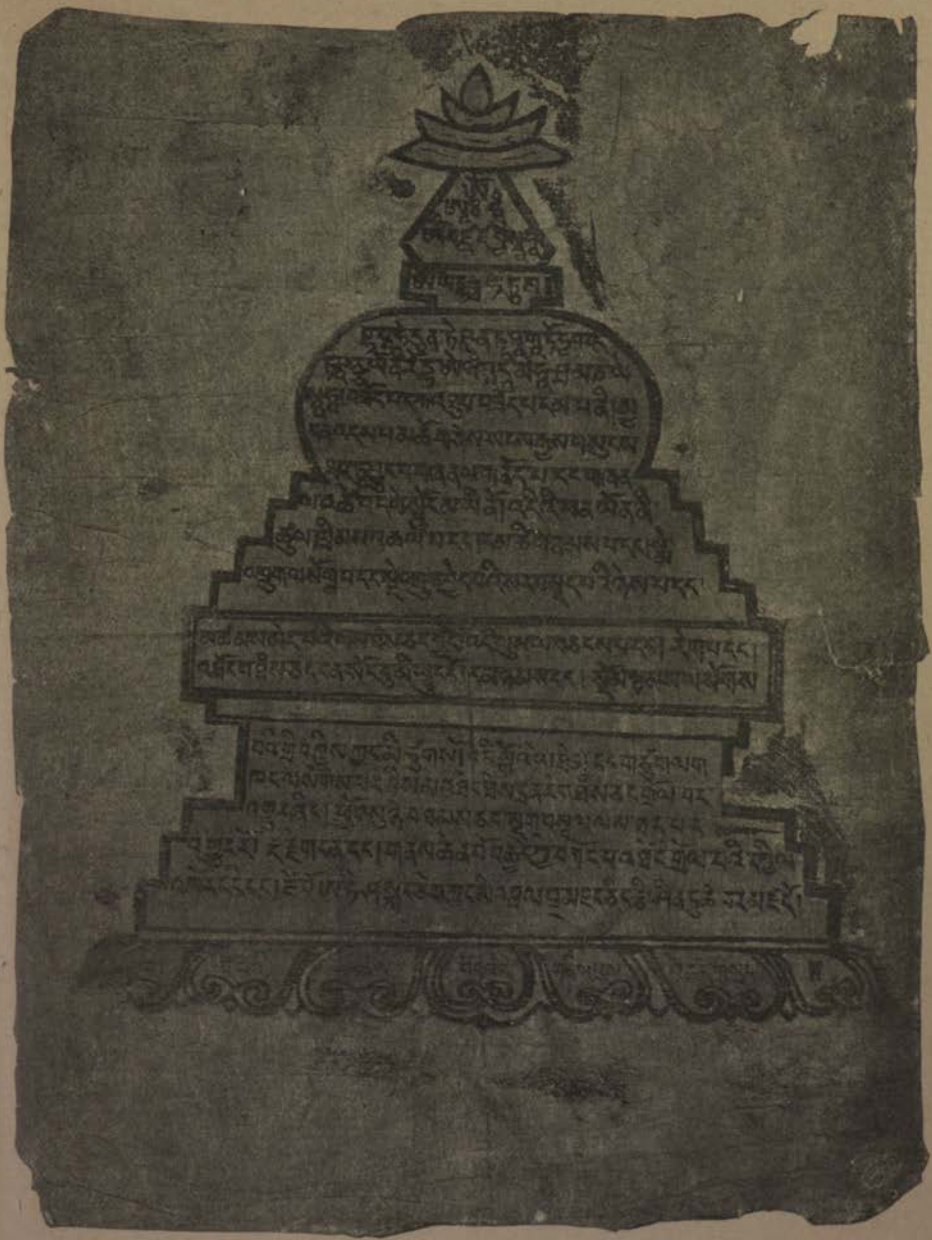
tomary fee. The priestly tax is not paid in money alone. The labours of the people's hands are at the disposal of the ruling caste. The corvée is known in Tibet as it was known in ancient Egypt, and no feudal seigneury of the Dark Ages in Europe ever exacted its full rights as mercilessly as this narrow sect of self-indulgent priests.

Invariably there will be found outside a house four things. The first is the prayer-pole or the horizontal sag of a line of moving squares of gauze; the second is a broken teapot of earthenware from which rises the cheap incense of burnt juniper twigs—a smell which demons cannot abide; the third, a nest of worsted rigging, shaped like a cobweb and set about with coloured linen tags, catkins, leaves, sprigs and little blobs of willow often crowning the skull of a dog or sheep. The eyes are replaced by hideous projecting balls of glass and a painted crown-vallary rings it round. Hither the spirits of disease within the house are helplessly attracted, and smallpox, the scourge of Tibet, may never enter there. Last of all is the white and blue *swastika* or fylfot, surmounted by a rudely-drawn symbol of the sun and moon. This sign, which will be found upon the cover of this book, marks every main doorway in the country.*

* A good deal of inaccurate statement has been made about the swastika. To nothing did I pay more attention than in noting the colour and shape of religious emblems as we penetrated deeper and deeper into the country. It is said that the swastika, as represented on the cover of this book, is consecrated to the use of orthodox Buddhists of whatever school, and that the swastika which kicks in the other direction, that is to say which revolves to the left, is used only by the Beun-pa, the aboriginal devil worshippers, whose faith was ousted by the adoption of Buddhism. This is not borne out by the relative frequency of position of the two swastikas in Tibet. The left-handed swastika (*i.e.*, that which turns to the dexter) is, if anything, the commoner of the two, and the commonest use of this symbol is in the opposition of the two kinds: thus the two halves of a doorway, or the pattern of a rug, will generally offer an example of the two kinds confronted.

Other more public charms against evil are the chortens or cairns which piety or terror has set up at small intervals along the road to be a continual nuisance to the impious traveller. Like the "islands" in Piccadilly or the Strand, they may only be passed to the left, and their position on the edge of a cliff often renders this in one direction a hazardous proceeding. There are, of course, no carts or wheeled vehicles of any kind in Tibet, or this superstition would long ago have become extinguished through sheer necessity. As it is, the chorten remains till the cliff itself falls, but to the last there is generally foothold on which to climb round the outside of a cairn. It may be noted as a psychological curiosity that, after living in the country for a few months, the least thoughtful man in the force usually adopted this superstition as he walked along, though, of course, when riding it is not unnatural for Englishmen.

Here and there one finds long walls, composed for the most part of inscribed stones; these *mendangs* or *manis* represent the accretions of many years, and some in Tibet are reported to be half a mile in length. They do not, however, assume the importance in the province of U that they possess farther to the west. To other pious memorials also the passer-by adds his contribution of a stone. A few white pebbles of quartzite carefully selected from the neighbouring stone-strewn field will acquire for him no small merit if heaped together in a little pyramid, or piled with careful balance one on the top of another. Prayer-wheels offer their fluted axles to the hand of the traveller in long rows, hung up conveniently beside the wall of a house. The poorest may thus accumulate merit. I have before referred to the



A common Tibetan house-charm. These are pasted over the walls in dozens ; the paper is yellow.

use of prayer-wheels, but it may be added here that besides the hand-turned wheels and those moved by water, the principle of the anemometer has long been known for the purposes of Lamaic devotion, and the essential principle of the turbine is found in little gauze-sided stoves which drive a tiny rotating tun by hot air forced through a spiral.

The walls of the merest hovels are plastered with yellow paper charms; and round their necks the people carry amulet boxes, without which no Tibetan ventures far. These are packed with a cheap little image of clay, a few grains of sanctified wheat, two or three written charms and a torn scrap of a sacred katag, originally thrown over the shoulders or head of some famous image. Pills, too, may be found in the box, red pills certified to contain some speck of the ashes of the Guru Rinpoche. For the special purposes of this year, one often found a small, sharply triangular piece of flint. This was guaranteed to be a perfect protection against the bullets of the foreigner. For all these things the lamas have to be paid, and we soon realised that their control over the souls of their flock was used solely to secure an unlimited tyranny over their worldly possessions. The riches of Tibet are, almost without exception, enjoyed by the priestly class.

It may be not without interest to draw attention to a curious and special use of the one doctrine which connects Lamaism still with Gautama by a fundamental dogma. It is a cynical misuse of the theory of re-incarnation, the employment of it as a political lever. Augurs do not look at augurs when they meet, but when they quarrel they sometimes afford the onlooker some amusement. The present Dalai Lama (at the time

of writing it does not seem at all clear that we have succeeded in weakening his hold upon place and power) made for political reasons a sudden and convenient discovery, that Tsong-kapa, the great reformer of Lamaism, was reincarnated in the person of the Tzar of Russia. This announcement was, of course, intended to smooth the way to that closer union between the two states which Dorjieff had so successfully managed to begin. As a statement in itself by the reincarnation of Avalokiteswara, it was difficult to deny or even to discuss the truth of the proposition. But the indignant Tsong du were equal to the occasion. They countered gracefully. In effect they said, "How interesting and how lucky for the Tzar!" But the guardian of this country, the Chinese Emperor, is also a reincarnation. He, as they reminded the forgetful Tubdan, is, poor man, the existing representation of the god of learning, Jampalang, and therefore is not lightly to be ousted from his predominance in Tibet.

Here matters remain, though the Grand Lama had no reason to regret the extension of this graceful courtesy to the Tzar. It is a fact beyond dispute, deny it as the Russian individual may, that the "Little Father," in virtue of his position as head of the Christian Church in Russia, sent with all ceremony a complete set of the vestments of a Bishop of the Greek Church to the Dalai Lama. This is perhaps the most extraordinary thing of all the strange incidents in connection with this odd expedition. A Russian would probably prefer to deny than to explain the fact. It does not seem probable that it was caused by any similar lapse from common sense as that which the early Christians displayed when they raised Buddha to a place

among the saints of the Church. (This is a fairly well-known fact, and, if evidence were needed, the life of St. Joasaph, as told in the "Golden Legend," would convince the most sceptical.) Still, it is a long step from including the personality of a very holy pagan by inadvertence among the pillars of the Early Church to the symbolic acceptance as a Christian, and subsequent appointment as an apostolically descended bishop, of the most typical character in the heathen world to-day.

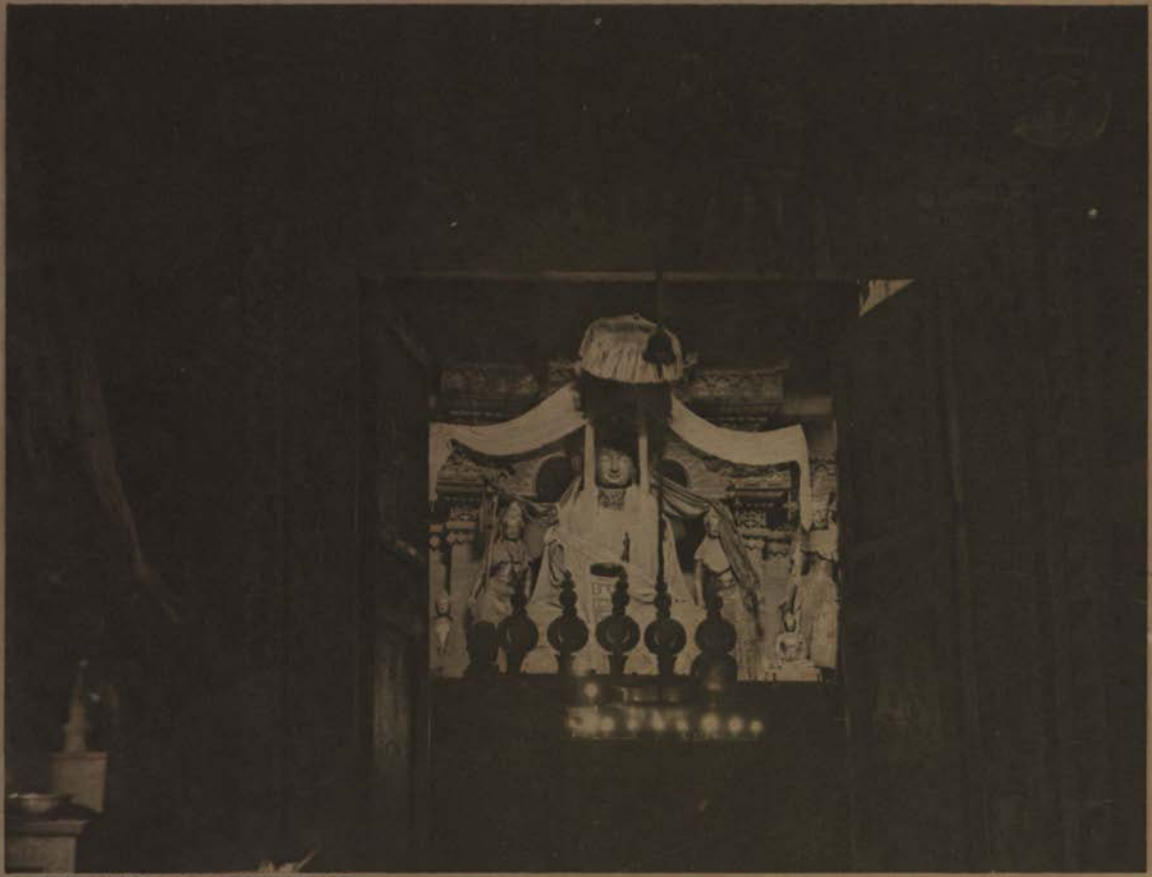
Among these freaks of politico-religious strategy, one of the most amazing was the reincarnate representative which, by universal consent, was found for the soul and spirit of one of the terrible guardian deities of the land and of the faith. Palden-lhamo is a dark-blue lady with three eyes who sits upon a chestnut mule drinking blood from a skull and trampling under foot the torn and mutilated bodies of men and women. Her crown is composed of skulls, her eye teeth are four inches long, and the bridle, girths and crupper are living snakes kept in position by the dripping skin of a recently flayed man. Of this atrocity the Tibetans found a reincarnation in Queen Victoria. This they did without the slightest wish or intention in the world to do anything but convey the highest possible personal compliment. The "horrible" aspect of these guardian deities does but increase their virtue and their efficacy. They represent the old heathen tyrants of the land who were brought into subjection by Buddha, and left with all their horrible attributes to scare away every evil, especially the intruder and the enemy. This last reincarnation was so well known, that a lama will think an Englishman ignorant if he does not know it: and he will explain that, after all, if proof were needed of

the truth of what they believe, it is to be found in the fact that Tibet, during Queen Victoria's long reign, was saved from invasion, saved even from that intercourse which they hate nearly as much, and that after her death and her return to be reincarnated again in a little child in Tibet, the English troops immediately bore down upon their sacred capital.

As I have said, no priestly caste in the history of religion has ever fostered and preyed upon the terror and ignorance of its flock with the systematic brigandage of the lamas. It may be that, hidden away in some quiet lamasery, far from the main routes, Kim's lama may still be found. Once or twice in the quiet unworldly abbots of such monasteries as those of Dongtse or Ta-ka-re, one saw an attractive and almost impressive type of man; but the heads of the hierarchy are very different men, and by them the country is ruled with a rod of iron. The vast aggregation of symbols and ceremonies which have strangled the life out of the simple and beautiful faith of Buddha is but a barrier which the more effectually separates the priestly caste from its lay serfs. To educate the latter in any way would be to strike at the root of Lamaic supremacy, and, therefore, the whole land is sunk in an ignorance to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. To these unlettered hinds the awful figures which scowl from the gompa wall, blood bespattered, with dripping tusks and bloated and beastlike bodies are as veritable as were ever the pictures of a mediæval hell to the frightened catechumen. To them the muttering or the fluttering of the strange charm, *om mani padme hum* is the easiest, and for them the only, pathway to a vague well-being after death, provided spiritual pastors shall

A Tibetan Sanctuary.

THIS PHOTOGRAVURE GIVES FAIRLY WELL THE USUAL APPEARANCE OF A LAMAIC SHRINE. THE NAVE OF THE TEMPLE, THOUGH HEAVILY COLOURED, IS IN COMPARATIVE DARKNESS, AND THE STRONGEST LIGHT FALLS UPON THE ALTAR AND THE BUDDHA. BEFORE HIM ARE TORMA, AND IN FRONT OF THEM AGAIN A ROW OF BUTTER LAMPS. *Vivid colours in darkness, idol gold, katags and gyantsen rainbow-hued.*



A TIBETAN SANCTUARY.

have sanctioned and hedged about with charms their earthly life.

These simple people are a pleasant race. You will always meet in the poorest hut with unfailing courtesy; not only is it an unquestioned duty, but you would believe it also to be a pleasure, for them instantly to bring forth an offering of their best. It may be small enough—a little bowl of barley, three or four eggs in the hand—but there it will always be. Eggs may cost but twopence a dozen in the nearest village, but it is only fair to remember that pennies are scarce among these poor people. They live a toilsome and hard life uncomplainingly, without the wits to realise that any other could be their lot. The ordinary villager sleeps and eats on the floor of the hut. Furniture he has, of course, none; two or three brass or copper bowls, a big unglazed red porcelain teapot, a few lengths of thick red or gray cloth are (besides the implements of his trade) all you will ever find in a Tibetan house.

Perhaps the best known thing about Tibet is the habit prevalent throughout the country for a woman to marry all her husband's brothers as well as himself. This is a curious custom and I do not think that any sufficient reason has ever been given for it; naturally it fills the nunneries, and the population of the country, whether due to this fact alone or not, is steadily decreasing. The plan, however, seems to work well enough so far as the family is concerned. Perhaps they expect very little, but the fact remains that these many-husbanded ladies seem able to keep a comfortable enough home for their changing housemates. That, I think, may be the reason why friction rarely or never occurs. If there are three sons in a family the third

will become a lama, the eldest will remain chiefly at home, the second son will tend the flocks on the grazing grounds or carry the wool to the nearest market; the two brothers, therefore, do not very often meet, and the good lady apparently chooses which of the two she would rather look after for the moment. The result is apparent in one way; the women have developed a distinctly stronger character than the men. No layman or lay-woman, of course, has any opportunity of public influence—that is entirely reserved for the lamas; but in the realm of commerce the women are usually supreme. Both at Gyantse and at Lhasa my experience was the same. It was the woman who managed the family trading, and if the man were there at all it was only to help in carrying the goods backwards and forwards between the bazaar and the town. I have at times known a woman refer to her husband before she would sell me any unusually good turquoise-studded charm box or other jewel, but as a rule they seemed to dispose of the family possessions without consulting anyone. Anyone who knows India will appreciate from this fact alone the vast difference that the barrier of the Himalayas causes. Some of these women are not bad-looking. I say this with some doubt, because, beneath the dirt of many years it is impossible to do more than guess at their complexions. Their children are charming little things.

Into the home life of the Tibetans our almost complete ignorance of the language, coupled with the state of armed neutrality, if not actual war, which so often characterised their attitude towards us, made it difficult for us to enter. So far as I could—far more than anyone else except O'Connor, with whom I generally

paid such visits, and whose fluency in Tibetan was as invaluable to both of us as it was exasperating and coveted by me—I made a point of seeing the Tibetans, both lay and clerical, in their homes.

On one occasion we went out for luncheon to a somewhat interesting family. The man was the eldest son of the Maharajah of Sikkim. At a period of stress in the relations between the Indian Government and the royal family of Sikkim, this young man had been given the choice between returning to the territory of Sikkim, or of forfeiting his succession. He elected to remain in Tibet, and from that day he has never seen his relatives. The present Crown Prince of Sikkim—one of the best known to Europeans of all the young princes of India—assumed the position, and, thanks entirely to the prudence and sympathy of Mr. Claude White, promises to become a useful and loyal Rajah. To his brother's house O'Connor and I went. Taring, his residence, is situated seven or eight miles from Gyantse along the road to Lhasa. It is a house of no great pretensions, prettily hidden among trees. The young couple entertained us hospitably; Prince Tso-dra Namgyel was simply but richly dressed, his wife was wearing a fine *kincob* and an exquisite head-dress in which the high aureole commonly in use was barely recognisable under the strings and riggings of pearls which webbed the whole thing. Servants there were in half dozens, and the meal we had was full of interest. It began with tea.

Tea in Tibet is a thing entirely after its own kind. It bears not the vaguest resemblance to the pale, scented beverage of China and Japan, nor to the milkless and lemon-flavoured glassfuls of Russia; still less to the

sugared slops which one finds in London. Tea in Tibet is imported in the shape of bricks, which vary very much in quality; they are made in the province of Sze-chuan and the tea-leaves are glued, with something that looks suspiciously like sawdust, into hard blocks of which it would puzzle Mincing Lane to distinguish the various grades. But for the veriest Tibetan child *du-nyi* is unmistakable for *du-tang*. Next to *du-nyi* comes *chuba*, and the last and worst kind is known as *gye-ba*.*

A corner is knocked off a five pound brick and it is infused with boiling water in a teapot. The tea is then poured into a cylindrical bamboo churn and a large lump of salt is churned up into it; the amount of energy which is spent upon this churning is extraordinary. I suppose the reason is that the heat should not be lost before the tea is drinkable. The moment this is well churned up, a pound of butter is also slid down into the bamboo and another minute's furious work produces the liquid as it is drunk in Tibet. If you are expecting the sweetened milky brew of England, when you put your lips to it you will be disgusted. It is a thickish chocolate coloured mess, sometimes strengthened with a little flour, to give it greater consistency. But if you will regard it as soup you will find that it has certain very sound qualities as a meal in itself. I have been actually glad to drink it after a long day.

After tea our exiled hostess gave us the real luncheon. It began with a heaped bowlful of boiled eggs. The worst of these meals in a new country is that you never

* It is characteristically Eastern that these four grades of quality, first, second, third and fourth should in Tibetan be called first, second, tenth and eighth. I make a small note like this in order to deter the matter of fact European from contradicting the statements of Central Asian travellers merely because they are logically impossible.

know either how, or how much to eat. The first question solves itself in Tibet because, except as curiosities, there are no spoons or forks. But we did not know how many courses were to follow, and it must be confessed that the first draught of Tibetan tea is extraordinarily effective in damping one's appetite. We tried two eggs apiece out of the white heap and waited. The servants did not so much change the dishes as accumulate them, and little by little other things came straggling in from the kitchen. The next course was composed of sweet chupatty-like things which had absolutely no taste whatever and were rather mealy in the mouth. Then came little balls of forcemeat skewered by fours upon a straw. These we eat conscientiously, but a following dish of twenty different kinds of sweets did not prepare us for the *mo-mo* which, as the Tibetan *pièce de résistance*, we should have anticipated. These are dumplings of thick pudding wrapped round strange meat. I would not for the world suggest that any mistake had been made by the cook, but after the sweets, this mixture of suet and carrion was almost more than we could stomach. However, the dish had to be eaten, and eaten it was. Prince Namgyel was hospitality itself and the drink he offered us was extraordinarily good. It was a home-made whiskey with all the peat reek of Irish potheen. Only too conscious of the diminishing stores of the Mission, both of us made a mental note of this excellent stuff and determined that we would take off our host's hands as much as he was willing to sell when our own supplies ran short.* I remember noticing behind

* Unfortunately, before another week had elapsed the Tibetans were bombarding the Mission, a state of war was declared, and poor Namgyel and his wife had fled to his father's other property on the shores of Lake Tsomo.

me, nailed up against a pillar, two coloured photographs. One was of the new palace at Gangtok, the other, somewhat to my surprise, was of our host's stepmother, the present Maharani. This lady, still one of the most attractive looking of Tibetan women, was a daughter of the great aristocratic Lhasan family of Lheding. The circumstances immediately preceding her marriage with the Maharajah, about seventeen years ago, drew a good deal of attention at the time to a personality, the strength of which is apparent after an acquaintance of five minutes. In other circumstances she might have exercised the same power as the Empress Dowager of China or as the mother of Queen Su-pi-ya-lat; as it is, the political officer of Sikkim will, if you ask him, assure you that she has long been a factor in our relations with Tibet which by no means could be disregarded. Her two eldest children were born to her husband's younger brother before she reached Sikkim. This lapse cannot be explained away as an instance of Tibetan polyandry, as no "wife" of a younger brother is here shared by the elder brothers. However, the matter was overlooked.

The walls of Taring were painted with minute delicacy, and the design of the invariably present animal acrobats—the bird on the rabbit, on the monkey, on the elephant—was the best I ever saw. We took leave of our kindly host and hostess, and the former a day or two later rode into camp for a luncheon, which this time was less of a change from the usual diet of the guest.

The servants of Tibetans, even of the highest, are abominably dirty. It was a curious thing to see outside the tent, in which the gleam of gold and brocade and light-blue silk mingled, the waiting attendants with

grimy faces and torn and dirty clothes. At Chema I obtained permission from the lady herself to photograph the belle of the Chumbi Valley. I wanted her to come out to the doorway of her house, but she was much too aristocratic a young woman to be so taken. I was asked to come into the women's apartments where, in an almost dark room, the lady, most beautifully dressed and certainly looking extremely handsome, was seated on a raised platform, with her dirty maid standing behind her. I did not want the maid in the picture, and said so. But Lady Dordém was firm; she had three husbands in the room at the time, but she would not be taken without a chaperon. She probably and very properly argued that no one who saw the picture could know that her natural protectors were at the photographer's elbow. The photograph was not a success, for an enormously long exposure was necessary and no contrast of any kind could be obtained.

Tibetan women of the highest class travel very little, but when they do, they wrap themselves in a huge shapeless rug, which almost conceals the fact that they are riding astride. The saddles of the Tibetans are curious high structures, under which a beautiful cloth is placed and the whole is then concealed by rug after rug. The rider is thus raised eight or nine inches from the horse's back, which gives his mount a camel-like appearance. No Tibetan rides very fast, but the ponies are trained to amble at a pace which gets over the ground as fast as anyone would care to trot. Shoes are not used, and the bits are merciful; but there is the inevitable Oriental insensibility to the sufferings of a galled and sore-backed brute. At these altitudes sores will not heal. When the skin is broken the want of

oxygen in the air delays the healing of the wound, but "out of sight, out of mind" is as true in Tibet as elsewhere, and the beast is still ridden day after day. On the crupper and bridle there are often fine filagree plates of brass and sometimes good Chinese enamel. The stirrups are unnecessarily heavy; a handsome dragon design is often embodied in them.

I have said that the Tibetans are a courteous race. Unlike Hindustani races, they not only have, but continually use, the words for please (*ro nang*, literally "good help") and thank you (*tu che*). The greeting to a visitor, corresponding roughly with "how do you do," is literally "sit and adhere to the carpet," while the farewell of a visitor may be translated "sit down slowly." His host speeds his departing guest with an adjuration to "walk slowly." The language is entirely distinct both from Hindustani and Chinese. It is an agglutinative, monosyllabic tongue, and neither the structure nor the fairly large vocabulary is difficult to acquire. But the trouble is that almost from the outset the practical colloquial language is found by the learner to be an inextricable tangle of idioms. Experience of the East should long have taught one never to say "why?" but the eccentricities of the Tibetan wrench it from one at every turn. A thing which is at once apparent, is the indistinctness with which it is muttered. If you were to say to a man "call me tomorrow morning at six o'clock," "*nga-la sang-nyin shoge chutseu druk-la kétang*" deliberately and slowly, he would smile politely, but make not the slightest attempt to understand; but if, on the other hand, you threw at him something like "*nyalsannin-shoshutsudullaketn*" you would be understood in a moment.

Some words used in Tibetan are very expressive; the word for a duck is "mud fowl"; to awaken is to "murder sleep," a flower is a "button (or canopy) of fire"; a general is a "Lord of the Arrow"; sunshine on the skirts of a departing rain storm is prettily rendered as a "flower-shower"; bribery could hardly be more neatly defined than by the Tibetan "secret push." One peculiarity of the language is the use of two opposites in conjunction to express the quality in which they differ—thus: distance is literally "far-near"; weight is "light-heavy"; height, *to-men*, is "high-low" and *dang-to*, "cold-warm," means temperature. The honorific vocabulary is an additional stumbling-block. For ordinary travelling purposes it is hardly necessary; the stranger will always be pardoned if he prefaces his remarks with an apology for not being able to speak the language of courtesy; but as every remark will instinctively be made to him in that language in spite of his protest, he will find himself very little advantaged. The vocabulary of the Tibetan language is enormous, and it is very widely known. It is not, perhaps, necessary to say more than that there is ready for use in Tibetan a single word, *ten-del*, which signifies "the interdependence of causes." *

The literature of the country is almost entirely religious. It consists of the Kan-gyur, or sacred scriptures, in over one hundred volumes; the Ten-gyur, or commentaries thereon, in three hundred volumes, and

* This is hardly the occasion for a full account of either the written or the spoken language. I may, however, in reference to the former, point out the difficulty of the spelling. Thus the province of "U" is spelled "Dbus" and "dé" (rice) is spelled "abras." "Ready" is pronounced "tan-di," but spelled either "gral sgrig" or "phral-grig."

countless tomes filled with the tales, parables, biographies and legends of the great teachers of the Lamaic Church. These books are wonderful things. It is not the least of the oddities of Tibet that in this unlettered country more beautiful books are produced than anywhere else in the world. Before the volume is opened, the covers alone present an example of beauty and loving care which Grolier could never have secured from the best of his binders. The outer cover is about thirty inches by eleven inches; it is of hard, close-grained wood, divided into three panels; each panel is carved with minute and exquisite workmanship. In the centre of each is one, or perhaps two Buddhas seated on the lotus throne, cut in a quarter-inch relief. Round him, with strong and free grace, the conventional foliage of the Bo-tree fills the entire field, except immediately overhead, where the *garuda* bird, all beak and eyes, sits keeping watch. Above and below are rows of smaller images carved in exquisite detail. The three panels are said to refer to the three conceptions of the Buddha. If that be so it is the only instance of Maitreya, or the coming Buddha, being represented squatting tailorwise in the Oriental fashion.* The whole cover is heavily gilt, and one turns the leaf to find a silk veil, probably of olive-green, carnation and rose-madder, protecting the first page of the manuscript itself. This page is made of fine stout paper, bearing in the middle what looks exactly like the depressed plate mark of an etching; the whole is of deep, rich-glazed Prussian blue, and in the inset panel in the middle the opening words of the book are written in large raised gold characters. The

* This statement, like most statements which have long been accepted about things Tibetan, is probably open to correction.

next page contains to the left a miniature, and then the book begins. From one end to the other it is painted in large regular letters of gold, some of the choicer books having alternate lines of gold and silver. Although they are no longer used, the holes through which the binding strap originally ran through the leaves themselves in two places are still left clear and indicated by a thin gold circle. Cumbersome, of course, these books are, but the care which is bestowed upon them would have delighted the heart of William Morris.

Art in Tibet is still in a conventional state. It is true that the technique of miniature painting upon an enormous scale has been thoroughly mastered by them; and, as I have said elsewhere, the only parallel to the microscopic work used on the walls of such buildings as the Palkhor choide, or the Na-chung Chos-kyong temple outside Lhasa, is that of the seventh and eighth century illuminators of the Irish school.

The figure of Buddha, which is here reproduced in colour, was copied by myself from the wall of the dining-room at Chang-lo. The original is of life size and was evidently painted by one of the most capable artists in Tibet. I do not remember ever having seen another similar figure as strongly designed, minutely finished, or delicately coloured. The use, indeed, of gold, which it is impossible adequately to reproduce, was both restrained and effective, and the transparent brown mastic which covers it mellows the semi-burnished surface. The rest of the wall was taken up with figures almost as carefully painted by the same hand. The disciples of the Master stand or sit round him in varying attitudes bearing the symbol of their identity, while the great teachers of Buddhism smile blandly from the side

walls dividing the Master from the " terrible " guardian monsters which confront the outer world in every Buddhist shrine.

The general effect of a painted wall in Tibet is not dissimilar from that of Italian tapestries of the best period, and I am inclined to think that the object of the designer in both cases is the same. In spite of the enormous amount of work brought into the smallest details of dress and the delicacy with which the flower work is done, I doubt whether the intention of the artist in either case is to produce figures to be examined by themselves. The general arrangement and composition of a Tibetan fresco is masterful. The ground is well covered, but never crowded ; the subordination of the less important to the more important is never mistaken, and in the greatest as well as the smallest matters the symbolism is unerring and full of significance. But the veriest stranger might go into such painted courts as those of the first floor of the Palkhor choide and remain perfectly contented with it merely as an almost moving carpet of colour and light.

Convention reigns supreme, but it does not take long for the most prejudiced European to realise that these golden and blue and red faced figures are essential to the artistic balance of the picture, as well as the meaning of the legend before his eyes. There are one or two photographs of painted walls in the pages of this book, and these will sufficiently indicate the general character of the design. Of the colour there is less to say. It is intensely strong, and though one rapidly realises that it is justified in the mass, it is not only as open to criticism in the detail as a holiday crowd of natives in India, but the secret of the extraordinary

A Tibetan Tang-ka.

THE READER MUST HERE IMAGINE THAT THE PICTURE IS MOUNTED UPON A RICH CHINESE BROCADED SILK. IT WOULD HAVE REDUCED THE PICTURE TOO MUCH TO INCLUDE THIS, BUT IT ADDS GREATLY TO THE EFFECT OF THE PICTURE.

A TIBETAN "TANG-KA."

harmonies so successfully produced remains completely beyond the power of European reproduction.

In the general arrangement for the internal decoration of an important room in a good house, Gautama will always be found in one form or another, seated either as a statue or in paint. The upper wall is sometimes furnished on either side with the close rows of pigeon-holes, which serve the Tibetan for library shelves. At times a more realistic form of ornamentation is attempted, and here the limitations of the artist are plain indeed. The religious subjects have, in the course of centuries, had their treatment crystallised into a purely national style of representation, and the moment the artist strays beyond this preserve he leans heavily upon the Chinese for support. Chinese perspective is used by them ; Chinese landscape, Chinese dresses and faces are helplessly copied by Tibetan artists, careless of the fact that neither in feature, robes nor surroundings are the two races alike. Once or twice I have seen a Tibetan attempt to represent some well-known natural feature in the country. In these cases it is necessary to read the description which generally accompanies the object to be perfectly certain what it is intended to represent.

The Sinchen Lama, as has been said, caused an able artist to record upon the walls of his room the incidents in the lives of preceding reincarnations, and the story has been told of the strange way in which he thereby foretold his own death and of a pleasant proof thereby of his affection for his little dog. The picture is difficult to photograph, and the only picture I was able to take is marred, not only by the reflected light from the windows behind, but by the fact that it is partially concealed by

the open door to the right, through which alone sufficient illumination could be obtained. All but the head of the dog is hidden. But that dog is in a way the test of art in Tibet; there is apparently no conventional method of representing a dog, and if there had been one, it is clear that the Lama would not have been satisfied with it, so this man was forced face to face with nature as he had perhaps never been compelled before. The portrait of the master of the dog is a piece of pure convention, as can be seen in the photograph, but the painting of the dog, intensely bad as it is from every point of view but one, remains the touchstone of Tibetan art. There is such a minute and laborious representation of every curl of hair that one would hardly be surprised to find that the artist had attempted to paint both sides of the dog at once. Bad as it is, that picture at any rate achieves its purpose, for that dog is as living, as recognisable and as pat-able an object as ever Briton Riviere created, and the affection of the lonely reincarnation, cut off from the living world from birth to death, for his one fearless and disinterested companion is apparent in every stroke of the brush. But I must confess that of all the acres of painted surface which I saw in Tibet this dog remains the only attempt to represent a subject naturally.

The decoration of the pillars, beams and brackets of houses is conventional to an extreme. I have been persuaded to insert a rough sketch of the colour used for the ornamentation of the great doors of the oracle's temple. With regard to this, and to the other coloured sketches by myself which have been included, I should like to say that only dire necessity has induced me to consent to the insertion of what is obviously bad work.

I cannot paint, but as I found myself the only man with a paint-box, I felt compelled to do what I could to record the colour of Tibet. Of the four landscape sketches, that of Gyantse jong from Chang-lo was taken towards the end of the day, because the bombardment slackened towards sunset, and I think that the dirt which it has collected in lying about has somewhat improved the effect. That of the main gateway was done earlier in the afternoon. Of the other two, that showing the back of the Potala Palace from the western side of the ford across the little stream was painted at mid-day; the fourth, a mere note of the general character of the rocks, mountains and vegetation round Lhasa, was painted on a cold gray morning. I have not attempted to improve these in any way; bad as they are, I thought it better to insert them as they had been painted at Lhasa or at Gyantse, and it may be that an artist could, in some measure, reconstruct from even these drawings some idea of the colour scheme of Tibet. I have among my other coloured sketches further notes, which might be useful to anyone attempting a picture of Lhasa. But I am firmly convinced that it would be impossible for anyone who has not seen the country to reproduce the dry glare and the raw edges of the day, or the rose-coloured magnificence of the evening. The plate representing the great golden idol of Lhasa was drawn from a sketch made on the spot; it was hurriedly done, but the lamas were positive in refusing me permission to photograph anything inside the temple. They did not seem to object to the sketch.

At Gyantse the chief local artist received several commissions from us which, as I have said, were never fulfilled, but I suspect that a good deal of his earlier

work afterwards fell into the hands of our men at the taking of Little Gobshi. Hundreds of *tangkas* * were then found, but as they were of no interest or value in the eyes of the native troops, the vast majority of them were thrown on one side, and the heavy rain of the following night disfigured the majority almost beyond recognition. These *tangkas* are the most characteristic and portable expression of modern Tibetan art. It says something for their good taste that those which they account most highly are the plain-line drawings in Indian red upon a gold back-ground, or of gold upon Indian red. Here the artist owes nothing to colour or shade, and some of the work is as strong and quaint as that of the " Guthlac " designs in the British Museum.

The majority of these *tangkas* display a large central figure surrounded by smaller flame- or smoke-framed pictures of the deities of Lamaism. These pictures often leave much to be desired on the score of propriety. It is one of the things which must be taken into consideration with regard to Lamaism that decency forms no part of it whatever. Immoral the Tibetan religion certainly is not, but to Western eyes its manifestations often assume the strangest shape.†

Unfortunately a change has recently come over Tibetan draughtsmanship. There is a falling away from the austere standard of other days, and there is a distinct tendency towards merely pretty and pink and white designs of a Chinese type. This is apparent not only

* A *tangka* is a roll painting on canvas or silk, framed in rich Chinese brocade, and generally resembling the kakemonos of Japan.

† It is interesting to notice that of the two more valued kinds of *tangka* those on a gold background are always austerely chaste, while those on a red field leave much to be desired on the score of decency. I think that those also on a dark blue background should be classed with the latter kind.

in the colouring but in the choice of subject. The colours used are curious; they are undoubtedly water-colours ground up with a large amount of body colour, and stiffened with glue or some such material. They last indefinitely and, so far as can be guessed, the tints do not fade. I do not think that the names of any artists are preserved.

The jewellery of Tibet is exquisitely finished, and in a slight degree suggestive of Byzantine work. The objects represented on coloured Plate will serve as examples of the finest work in the country. The crown came originally from the head of a Buddha in Né-nyeng Monastery. Nothing can exceed the delicacy with which the figure of Buddha in carved turquoise is inset into the central leaf. The foliation throughout is strong, clean cut and decided, and the general balance of the diadem will, I think, be universally admitted. It is a good specimen of the best Tibetan work, and the sparing use of turquoise in its composition is the more satisfactory because it is clear that neither time nor money was spared in its manufacture. The two earrings I bought in Lhasa. They are of gold and of the usual design set with large pieces of turquoise. That to the right is reversed to show the back. The square charm box in the centre was also procured in Lhasa. It is of typical design, but the stones and general workmanship are undoubtedly above the average. Above and below it are two beautiful charm boxes of gold and turquoise. Both workmanship and stones are of the finest class. The single earring touching the crown is that worn by men, and it is to be noticed that the lower drop is never real turquoise. Even in the case of the highest dignitaries this pendant is invariably blue

porcelain-like glass. The encircling necklace is of raw turquoise lumps set in silver and separated one from another by large coral beads. The necklace to which the central charm box is attached is singularly characteristic.

The brass work of the Tibetans exhibits their art in its highest form. The little gods which sit in rows along the altar shelves of Tibet are models of good and restrained convention. The finish is delicate, and the sheer technical skill with which the artist manipulates his material is undeniable. Examples of these statuettes will be seen on p. 379. The same delicate workmanship is carried also into other objects of their daily life or religion. The plate showing different articles which were lately in the possession of the deposed and assassinated Regent of Lhasa will give a better idea of the workmanship often bestowed upon these things than pages of description. The white teacup and the yellow glass bowl are the only articles in the plate which are of Chinese manufacture. The former contains an almost invisible design watermarked into the material. Tibetans are capable of producing pottery of a fair quality, but this is quite beyond their powers.

The woven stuffs of Tibet are extremely interesting, and the patterns are indigenous. I have elsewhere suggested that in rugs alone a thriving and successful trade might be carried on with the neighbourhood of Gyantse. Most of their silks are imported from China. It may fairly be said that nothing manufactured in Tibet is positively ugly, and though the hierocratic tendencies which have checked the political independence of the people of the country have also tended to confine its artists within narrow channels, the very stiffness

Tibetan jewellery.

THIS PLATE IS SUFFICIENTLY DESCRIBED IN THE TEXT.

TIBETAN JEWELLERY.

Articles in the possession of the late Regent of Tibet, who was put to death by the present Dalai Lama about 1895. The porcelain tea-bowl and the yellow glass are of Chinese manufacture. All the rest are examples of the finest Tibetan work. From left to right: (Upper row) Reliquary (silver), tea-bowl stand (silver gilt), gauo (silver), tea pot (silver, brass, copper and gilt), prayer wheel (silver), ceremonial silver gilt bowl, yellow glass, skull bowl (silver gilt and bone); (Lower row) gauo (silver), lotus bowl (silver gilt), gauo (silver). These are all in the possession of Mr. Claude White, Political Officer in Sikkim.

A chorten of silver, set with turquoises, of good Tibetan workmanship. The small statuettes on the left, the two butter lamps, and the top of the tea jug at the bottom, are all characteristic of the country.

of the style has not been without its definite use in educating the natural taste of the people. The blaze of colour inside a Tibetan gompa might be thought garish by a student of the half tones of Europe, but it must be remembered that in this land of thin pure air and blinding light, harmonies and discords are to be judged by other standards than those of Europe.

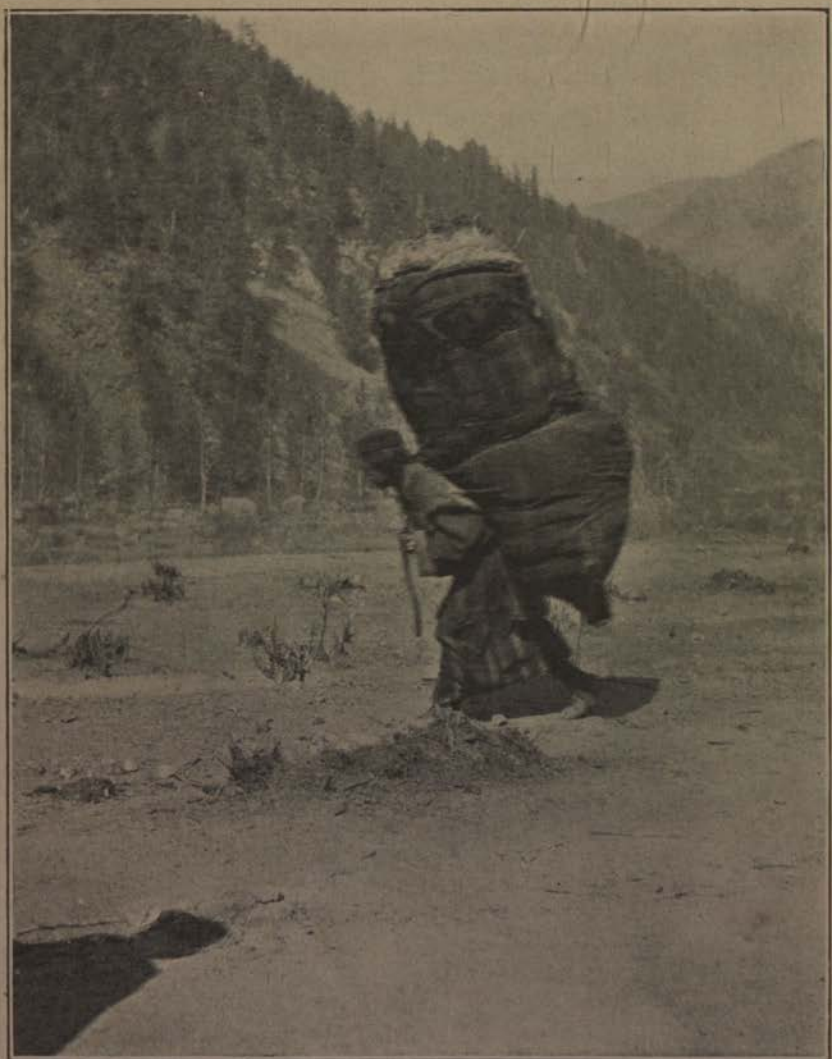
Of the music of Tibet it is impossible to say much. The temple services are intoned on three or four notes, of which, I should say, the intervals are approximately semi-tones. But the Tibetans have not reached the stage at which noise ceases to be the first aim of the musician. By this I do not necessarily mean that the noise is always an ugly one. The sound, heard a mile away across the plain, of a temple gong beaten, or the long seductive purr of a well-blown conch comes into the pictures of one's memory as not their least attractive feature. But heard close at hand the music of Tibet is merely barbarous. The temple orchestra usually consists of seven men; two of them are occupied with one of the big trumpets, one to hold it up, the other to blow it. These trumpets furnish forth a grating noise proportioned in depth to the length of the instrument. As this is anything up to twelve, or, in the case of one trumpet in Potala, eighteen feet, the note produced is low. Two other men blow as seemeth good to them upon shorter trumpets, one about four feet in length, the other a small sixteen-inch instrument, generally made out of a human thigh-bone with copper end pieces. Two men also will devote themselves to *gyalings;* these are short reed-blown clarinets. The last and most important member of all is he who beats the drum. The drum is a kind of warming-pan-like

structure, and the parchment of its three-foot head is struck with a sickle-shaped stick. By a convention, which is like that of Europe, the drummer manages the cymbals also. Powerful instruments these are, taking unquestioned command of the babel whenever used.

Besides all these the officiating Lama will from time

Tibetan women washing. This was the only occasion on which I ever saw a Tibetan wash anything. I do not think anyone else was as fortunate. Tsechen Monastery rises in the distance to the left.

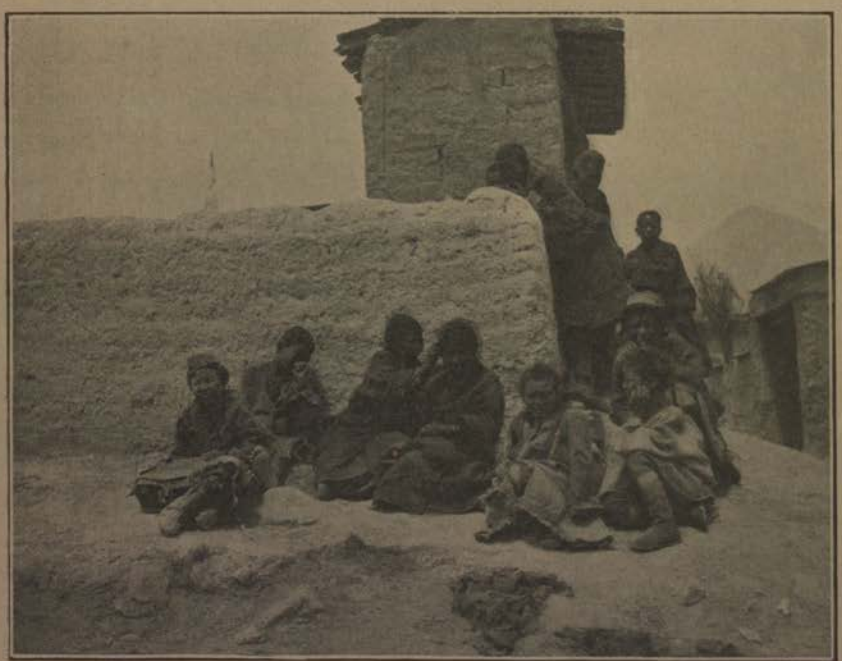
to time ring a sweet silvery-toned bell at, no doubt, the accurate intervals, but it must be confessed that the general effect of a Tibetan service is not unlike that of a farm yard, or a nursery, and it may still be many years indeed before order is given to these sounds confused. One or two tunes they have which can be recognised.



Woman-labour in the Chumbi Valley. This load probably weighed three times the usûal man's burden over the pass.

One of them is *par excellence* the melody of the Orient. I do not know if it has a name, but Mrs. Flora Annie Steel has sufficiently indicated its scope and cadence by wedding to it the words, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

The marriage customs of Tibet are like those of the vast majority of mankind—the lady is bought. But one



Tibetan children.

feature in the preliminaries differentiates it strongly from the methods of modern England. The girl's mother will firmly and repeatedly insist upon the ugliness and uselessness of her *débutante* whenever a suggestion is made by the professional matchmaker of the village. This modesty, however, can be overcome by a little negotiation. Groomsmen and bridesmaids are, I believe,

as necessary to a smart wedding in Tibet as in America, and if Chandra Das is to be believed, the difficulty of knowing whether a wedding present is expected or not is overcome in Lhasa by a simple device. The maiden presents a cheap little katag or scarf to everyone from whom she would like a wedding gift. There is a slight religious service at the actual marriage. The officiating lama, after prayer, declares the woman to be from henceforth the bride of her husband alone—and his brothers. The usual Oriental overeating accompanies the rite. Divorce in Tibet is expensive, but easily obtained, though the necessity for any such annulment of the marriage tie is greatly reduced by the frequency of " Meredithian " marriages.

I have inserted on p. 382 a curious photograph. This was the only occasion on which I saw anyone in Tibet wash anything, and I did not hear of anyone else having noticed the operation. The clothes were lathered on the bank with one hand while with the other the woman jerked water from a wooden scoop upon them from the stream.

Tibetan women are short but sturdily built. The illustration on p. 383 was taken in the Chumbi Valley to show the enormous weights which these girls will carry. In the case illustrated, the burden was entirely voluntary. The inhabitants were paid by the job, and the price we paid for the tightly rammed down grass which this woman is bringing in probably kept her and her husbands in Tibetan luxury for a week.

Children do nothing but loaf about the streets till they are ten. The over-leaf photograph will give a very good idea of the appearance of the younger generation of Tibetans, and the occupation of the two

central figures is as characteristic as anything in this volume.

In private life the Tibetan is a cheerful body with, of course, the defects of that amiable quality. Not infrequently he gets drunk and he has at no time many morals. But he is a hard worker, capable of enduring for weeks extremes of physical discomfort which would incapacitate a native of India in a day, and, above all, it must be set down to his credit that he is merciful to his beast. The tail-twisting of bullocks stops at our frontier. He has, of course, no nerves, or it is possible that the dogs which swarm over the country and form one of its most prominent features would fare badly even at the hands of a Buddhist.

They are an unmitigated nuisance, savage by day and noisy by night. Every breed of dog known to the fancier seems to have been mixed in this sandy-coated pack. It is curious, however, that in spite of the out-of-door life which is led by them, the type to which they have reverted is not that of the wolf or collie, but rather that of the Esquimaux sledge dog. Some of them are easily domesticated, and the puppies are friendly little things only too anxious to be adopted. The typical Tibetan terrier, a long-coated little fellow with a sharp nose, prick ears, and, as a rule, black from muzzle to tail, we found but seldom in a pure state.*

* The finest specimens of this breed are owned by Mrs. Claude White—"Tippoo," "Jugri," and scantily-coated "Nari" came up with us to Lhasa with their master. But "Sebu," a sable freak in the same family, and beyond question the most beautiful of them all, remained at Gangtok.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NOTES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SOUTHERN TIBET.

By Captain H. J. Walton,
Indian Medical Service, lately Medical Officer and Naturalist to the Tibet Frontier Commission, 1903–4.

The following sketch of the Natural History of Southern Tibet is not intended to be, in any sense, an exhaustive list of the fauna of that area; it is merely a brief account of some of the more striking animals that were met with in the districts visited by the Tibet Frontier Commission. While I do not think that much of popular interest is omitted, I would point out that, during the months when Natural History observations would have been of the greatest interest, indulgence in such pursuits for those members of the Commission who were at Gyantse—amongst them myself—was strictly discouraged by the Tibetans, who emphasized their disapproval of the wandering naturalist by forcible protests from the famous "jingals from the Jong."

MAMMALS.

Of the larger mammals, that with which we became most familiar was the Kiang (*Equus hemionus*).* Both at Kamba jong and at Tuna there were large numbers of these wild asses. They went about, as a rule, in troops of ten to thirty, though, if alarmed, several herds would unite temporarily. There is nothing horse-like about the kiang, but from his size and fine carriage he resembles a large mule, rather than an ass. The reddish chestnut colour of the upper parts is well shown off by the white belly and legs. The mane is of a darker colour, and

* The Natural History Museum in South Kensington of which the authorities have been kind enough to look through this proof for me—has, in one or two cases, adopted for the national collection a different classification from that of Capt. Walton. In order that his identifications may be recognised in every case, I have appended the N. H. M. name in a foot-note where there is any divergence.—P. L.

this colour is continued as a narrow stripe along the middle of the back, and for some distance down the tail. As the kiang is not harassed by the Tibetans, those we saw were fairly tame, and would allow one to approach to within about sixty yards of them. Then the herd would show signs of uneasiness, and would move off for a hundred yards or so. On several occasions I tried to get at closer quarters with them. I rode slowly towards a herd and the moment the animals became in the least alarmed, I galloped towards them as fast as possible; but the kiangs outdistanced me without an effort; indeed, I never succeeded in getting them to do more than make off at an easy canter. It is true that my Tibetan pony was not particularly speedy, but a greyhound that belonged to one of the officers of the Commission escort was almost equally unsuccessful in the chase of these fleet-footed animals. At Lhasa there were three semi-tame kiangs; all were mares. Even these, however, although one could approach to within twenty yards of them, resented attempts at closer intimacy. The kiang must be a very hardy animal. Those at Tuna seemed none the worse for the very low temperatures experienced there, though their only food consisted of coarse grasses, to reach which they often had to scratch away the snow.

According to Blanford and other authorities, the kiang is merely a variety of the Asiatic wild ass, another variety of which (*E. onager, v. indicus*) occurs in Western India and Baluchistan. It is strange that an animal should be found in the bare desert tracts, west of the Indus, exposed to quite the other extreme of temperature to that to which its near ally is subjected in Tibet.

A few specimens of the Great Tibetan sheep (*Ovis hodgsoni*) were obtained at high elevations, on the slopes of the mountains near Kamba jong. A fine male is said to measure four feet at the shoulder and bears a pair of massive horns, which differ from those of *Ovis poli* by their curve not forming a complete circle. The Tibetan sheep is closely allied to *Ovis ammon*.

Bharal (*Ovis nahura*) were very common on all the lower mountain ranges. The females and young, which keep together, were constantly seen and were surprisingly tame, but the old males with good heads required careful stalking. The Tibetans used to shoot a good many about Kamba jong. The bharal is

a wonderful climber ; even quite young ones negotiate the most formidable-looking precipices with apparent ease. Bharal mutton, except that of old males, is very well flavoured, though it is not to be compared, as an article of food, with the Tibetan gazelle.

This Tibetan gazelle or goa (*Gazella picticaudata*) was one of the commonest animals that we encountered. It occurred in large herds on all the open plains and downs. The horns of the male are closely ringed and much curved back, being commonly from twelve to fourteen inches in length. The female is without horns. Gazelle shooting is about the easiest sport to be obtained in South Tibet. The meat is excellent for the table. Except in places where they had been much worried by us, the gazelles were, as a rule, by no means shy. During the day they scatter about grazing over the plains. When alarmed, the individuals generally unite into a herd and make off at a rapid pace at first, but by using ordinary caution one could generally approach within range of them again.

I have been much puzzled by a statement made by Sir Joseph Hooker, in his "Himalayan Journals." He mentions antelopes ("Chiru," *Pantholops hodgsoni*) occurring near the Cholamu Lake. Whatever may have been the case in Hooker's time, I am almost certain that there are no antelopes in this part of Tibet at the present day. The furriers at Lhasa had no skins, nor did I see any horns offered for sale. I made enquiries of several educated Tibetans, and they all asserted that the animal occurred considerably to the west of the country visited by the Tibet Frontier Commission.

Of the carnivora of South Tibet, the snow leopard (*Felis uncia*) is the largest. Though rarely seen by us—I myself only saw one during the fourteen months that I spent in Tibet—it appears to be fairly common, judging by the numerous skins that were offered for sale by the Tibetans.

The lynx (*F. lynx*) also is tolerably common. This animal is by some authors considered to be a distinct species (*F. isabellina*) from the European lynx, but the distinction appears to rest mainly on the fact that the Tibetan lynx is paler in colour than the other.

On two occasions, near Gyantse, I saw a small light-coloured

cat. This was probably Pallas's cat (*F. manul*); but as I did not succeed in shooting one, and as the Lhasa furriers had no skins that I recognised as belonging to this species, I am uncertain about their identification.

Wolves (*Canis laniger*) were shot occasionally during the winter. The ordinary Tibetan wolf appears to be considerably paler in colour than the European animal, but Dr. Blanford considers that the two belong to the same species. A black variety of the wolf is said to occur in Tibet, but I saw none.

Otters were seen on several occasions in the vicinity of Phari jong. It is much to be regretted that no specimens were obtained.

We shot examples of two species of foxes. At Kamba jong, *Vulpes alopex, var. flavescens*, is common. It closely resembles the common fox of Europe, of which it is considered a variety, differing, like so many Tibetan animals, in being paler in colour. It carries a magnificent brush. The length from nose to tip of tail of one that I procured—an adult male—was 44½ inches, and the height at the shoulder 14¾ inches.

The other fox (*V. ferrilatus*) is a smaller animal, with a relatively much shorter tail. It occurs from the neighbourhood of Gyantse to Lhasa. A fine male, shot near the Karo la Pass, measured thirty-six inches in length.

A light-coloured weasel (*Putorius alpinus*) was tolerably common at Gyantse. Its habits are very similar to those of the European weasel, and it feeds largely on birds.

The woolly hare (*Lepus oiostolus*) is universally distributed. The most obvious distinction from the British hare is afforded by the large patch of grey fur over the rump of the Tibetan species. This characteristic patch is well marked even in quite young leverets. The woolly hare is singular in its custom of habitually squatting among bare stones on the hillsides in preference to the grassy plains. It was particularly numerous at Kamba jong, where on one occasion three guns shot fifty-four in about three hours.

The Tibetan marmot (*Arctomys himalayanus*) occurred very locally throughout the country. It was nowhere very numerous, and its whistling call was heard more often than the animal itself was seen. The places affected by this beast were all at very high elevations. The burrows, the entrances to which resemble those of the common rabbit, are frequently made under rocks.

The marmots appear to hibernate from about the middle of October to the beginning of April. This is quite a large animal, the body being as much as two feet in length.

A much smaller marmot than the preceding species, specimens of which I saw but did not shoot near Phari jong, in the Chumbi Valley, was probably *Arctomys hodgsoni*. If so, this species would appear not to hibernate as strictly as its larger relative, as it was in January that I saw it.

One of the commonest rodents in South Tibet is Hodgson's mouse-hare (*Lagomys Ochotona curzoniæ*). Wherever the country is tolerably level the ground is tunnelled in all directions by its burrows. This species is highly gregarious, and does not hibernate at all. Even during the severest cold of the winter the little mouse-hares could be seen sitting at the mouths of their runs, sunning themselves. Although they are essentially social animals, large numbers living in close proximity to one another, as a rule their burrows are quite distinct one from another; and although in case of a sudden alarm a mouse-hare will take refuge temporarily in the nearest burrow, I noticed on several occasions the presumably rightful owner of the burrow driving the intruder away. The mouse-hare is a little, tailless beast with small rounded ears. It is in shape rather like a guinea-pig, and is of about the size of a large rat. The friendly terms on which it lives with a small bird—the brown ground-chough (*Podoces humilis*)—recall the somewhat similar association between the "prairie-dog" (*Cynomys sp.*) and the ground-owl (*Speotyto cunicularis*), though in the latter case a rattlesnake is said to form a third member of the "happy family."

Both field-mice and house-mice occur in South Tibet, but the species have not yet been identified. A newspaper correspondent, in an account he gave of a visit to the Jo-kang in Lhasa, speaks of white mice living in one of the shrines of this cathedral. This is an error. The mice in this shrine, which are surprisingly tame, belong to the species of the ordinary house-mouse of Tibet. This is larger than *Mus musculus*, and considerably paler in colour.

Although I was constantly on the look-out for them, I did not see a single bat in Tibet. I was informed by an officer of the escort that he had seen some very small bats flying round the jong at Gyantse. I went to the place mentioned on many

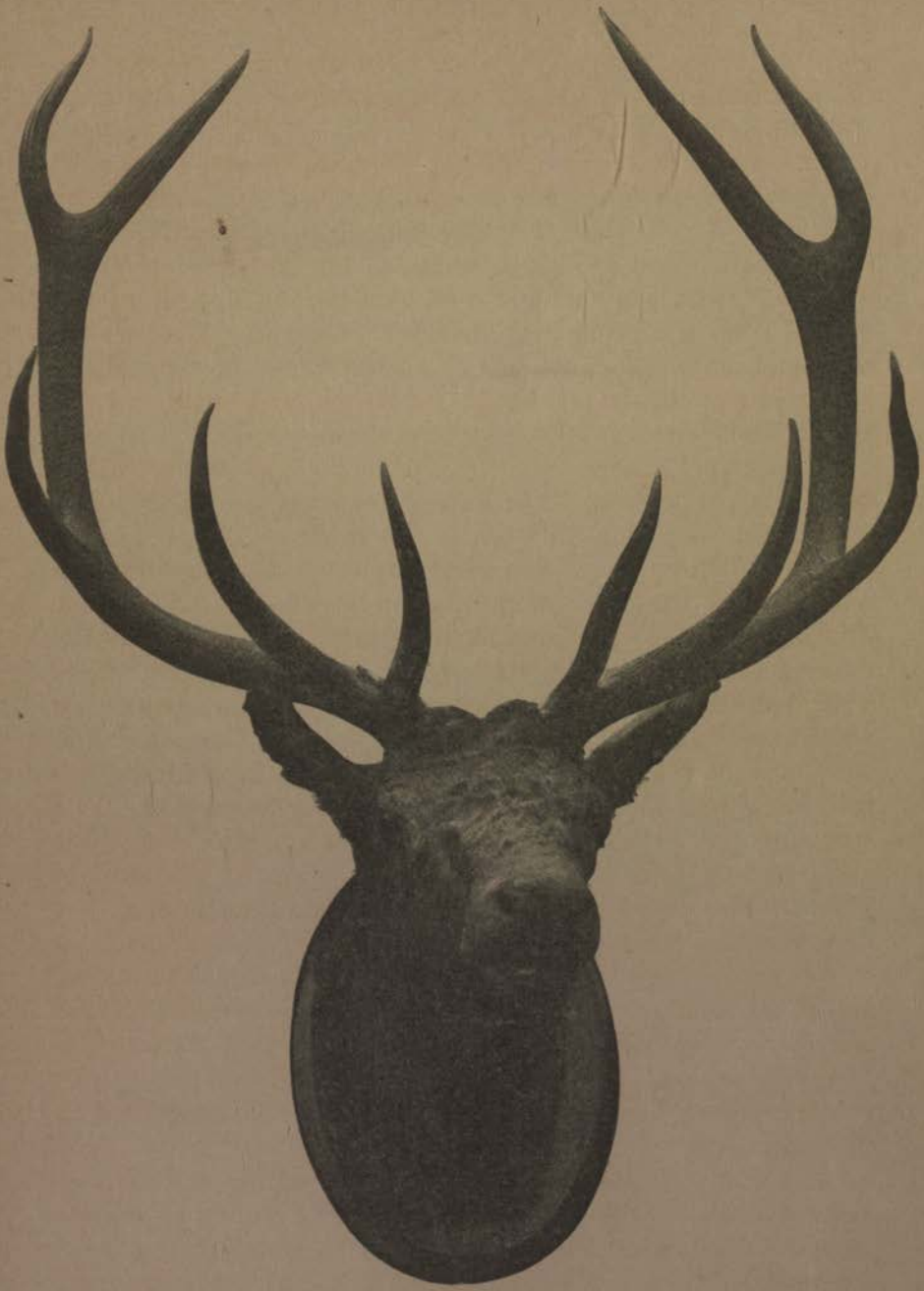
evenings, but no bats appeared, and I think it probable that the officer mistook for small bats the crag martins which abounded about the rocks.

At all low elevations musk-deer (*Moschus moschiferus*) were common, and nowhere more so than at Lhasa. Considering its abundance, I was amused at the impudence of some Tibetans who wished to sell me a live specimen for thirty-five pounds! The musk, which is obtained from a gland on the belly of the male, is, as usual, much in demand among the Tibetans for medicinal purposes. The chief characteristics of the animal are the large movable lateral hoofs, the long canine teeth, and the peculiar brittleness and wiry texture of the fur.

I was much disappointed at having no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the shao (*Cervus affinis*). This somewhat mysterious stag—mysterious, at least, as far as its geographical distribution is concerned—must be, to judge from its antlers, one of the finest of the Asiatic *Cervidæ*. I took a great deal of trouble in endeavouring to ascertain from the Tibetans something definite about the area it inhabited. The antlers were common in many monasteries throughout the country we visited, and in the shops at Lhasa, but beyond saying that the shao inhabited a tract of country to the south of Lhasa, my informants were all exceedingly vague in their statements. Two specimens (one of which, a female, was captured alive, but which unfortunately died) were obtained by officers in the Chumbi Valley.* These evidently came into the valley from Bhutan, but I obtained no reliable evidence as to how far to the East this species ranges. I was told that the reason so many shao antlers are for sale at Lhasa, is that they are in great demand by Chinese merchants, who export them to China to be used medicinally. It is a great pity that the antlers are considered to be most valuable when "in velvet," as this naturally necessitates killing the animal.

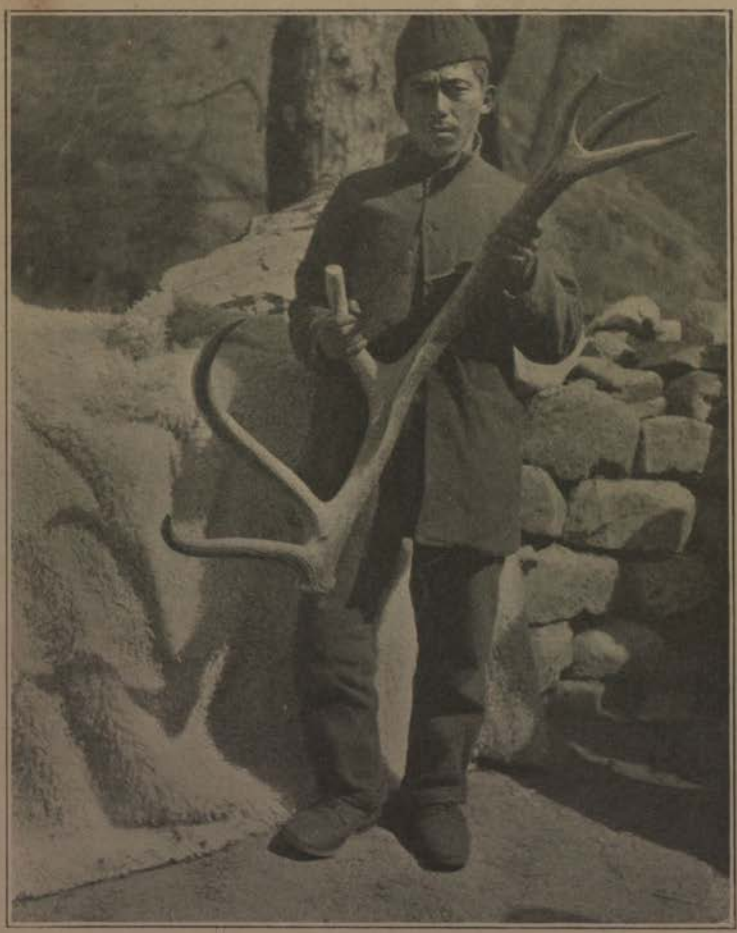
The wild yak (*Bos grunniens*) does not inhabit the parts of Tibet visited by the Tibet Frontier Commission, but domesticated animals are used everywhere for purposes of transport. All tame cattle are phlegmatic creatures, but the palm must certainly be awarded to the yak for the highest form of philo

* Another small and immature specimen was bought by Brig.-General Macdonald at Lhasa, but this also died. P. L.



The head of a "shao," or Tibetan stag (*Cervus affinis*). In the possession of Claude White, Esq.

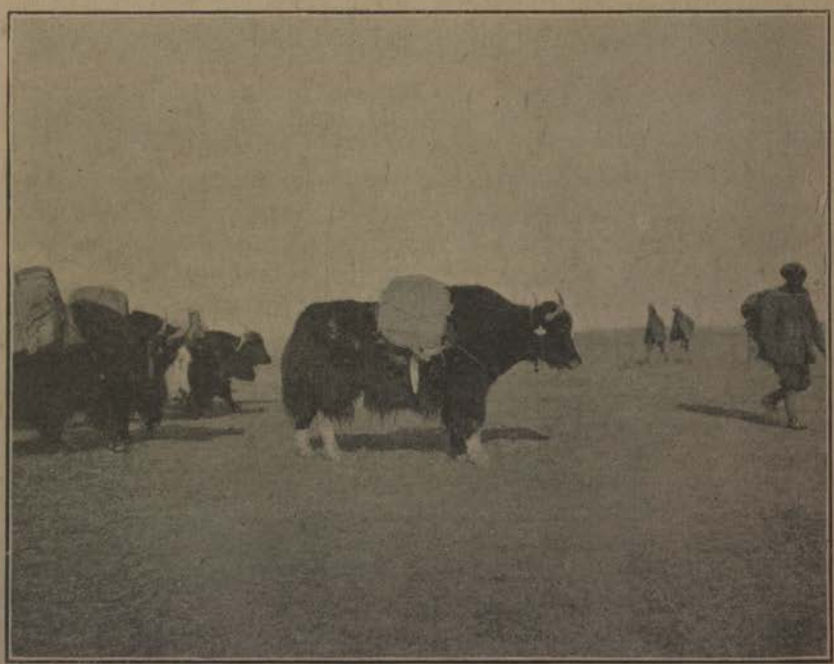
sophical imperturbability. It appears to be perfectly indifferent to the weather, provided only that it is cold enough; it forages for itself, and requires no grooming, stabling, or other attention. At night the Tibetans secure their yaks in a row by tying thin



A curiosity: a six-pointed "shao" horn from Chema.

yak-hair cords to the beasts' horns and to a thicker pegged-out rope. One would think that the yaks had only to shake their heads in order to free themselves, but it never seems to occur to them how easy it would be to escape. Yak drivers, on the march, encourage the yaks to step out by shrill whistles; if

more drastic measures are required they hurl rocks, with unerring aim, or sling stones, with equal skill, at the unfortunate animals. For agricultural work, especially for ploughing, the Tibetans generally use hybrids between the yak and ordinary cattle, as these are more docile and easier to manage than the pure-bred yak. A peculiarity of the yak, that I have not seen referred to anywhere, is the colour of the tongue. In some yaks this is quite black, while in others it is of the usual red colour. In



A pack-yak.

connection with this fact it is interesting to remember that several of the domestic dogs of Eastern Asia (for instance, the chow-chow) have black tongues; but if, as I believe is the case, the Polar bear and occasionally the Newfoundland dog also have tongues of this colour, it seems impossible to imagine any reason for this peculiarity. Possibly it is confined to animals living in cold countries, but this suggestion does not explain why only about half the yaks are black-tongued. More information is required on this subject.

Ploughing yaks in the Nyang chu Valley. The head-dress is of crimson and white, and the necklaces are of plaited leather and cowrie shells. The nose ring is tied to the red and white frontal ornament by a strip of filagree brass.

With the exception of the dogs, there is nothing of special interest about the other domestic animals of South Tibet. Excellent wool and well-flavoured mutton is provided by the sheep, and the common goat of the country is a small long-haired animal, resembling the goat of Kashmir.

Although, as a rule, not much trouble is taken by the Tibetans in breeding their dogs, these animals are much prized by the people. Apart from the swarms of cross-bred mongrels, it is possible to recognise at least four well-characterised breeds. Of these, the finest is the so-called Tibetan mastiff. This is a great shaggy creature, with a very massive head. It is usually black-and-tan in colour, and has a very thick, rough coat. Its eyes show some "haw" like a bloodhound, and it has the pendulous lips of that breed. No monastery of any pretensions in Southern Tibet is without at least a pair of these fierce dogs chained up on either side of the entrance.

The commonest dog is very like a badly-bred collie, but lacks the magnificent frill and brush of the latter.

The Lhasa terrier is an entirely distinct breed. It is very similar to a drop-eared Skye terrier, but carries its tail, which is densely feathered, tucked up tightly over its back. It is extremely common at Lhasa, but most of the dogs there are too long in the leg, and I had much trouble in procuring a really good specimen.

The other distinctive breed is the Tibetan spaniel. This is a small black dog—sometimes black-and-white—rather like a Pekinese spaniel. Good specimens of this dog are even more scarce than Lhasa terriers. The dogs that are prized most by the better-class Tibetans are small Chinese lap-dogs, of various kinds, that are brought as presents from Peking by the merchants.

The Dalai Lama has an elephant at Lhasa. This was sent to him, I believe, either from Nepal or Bhutan. It is a small male with slender tusks, and has lived in perfect health at Lhasa for some years.

BIRDS.

Among the resident Tibetan birds, two—the lämmergeier (*Gypa tus barbatus*) and the raven (*Corvus corax*)—are of particular interest. Both species are almost ubiquitous throughout Southern Tibet; they appear to be quite impervious to the

rigours of the climate, and keep fat and lively under conditions that would be fatal to other birds of their great bulk. The powers of flight of the lämmergeier are truly superb, and it is a magnificent sight to see one circling, without an effort, around some precipitous mountain-peak, an occasional flap of the wide wings sufficing to impart all the impetus required. The old stories of lämmergeiers carrying off babies from Alpine villages are pretty well discredited nowadays; certainly the Tibetan bird appears to feed entirely on carrion, associating with griffon vultures around the carcases of yaks, sheep and other animals. On one occasion I put up a hare, which ran for a hundred yards or more along a bare hillside, a few yards below a lämmergeier that was sailing along close to the ground. The latter took absolutely no notice of the hare, which it might easily have seized. No doubt a lämmergeier *may* occasionally take a living animal, but I fancy that it would only do this if the beast were sickly or very young. There were hundreds of lämmergeiers about the camps of the Commission at Kamba jong and Tuna, and I had daily opportunities of studying their habits, but I never saw them eating anything but offal or dead animals. The length of the lämmergeier's wings prevents the bird from rising at once from the ground; when it wishes to fly, it is obliged to hop forwards for some yards, in order to get up a little "way," and it then presents rather a grotesque appearance. The weak, querulous cry also seems very inappropriate to such a noble-looking bird. During the summer months the lämmergeier retires to the higher mountains, where it makes its large nest on some rocky ledge; but, even then, it comes down to the plains at times, especially in the evening. Thus, both at Gyantse and Lhasa, these birds were always to be seen. The wedge-shaped tail and peculiar flight enable one to recognise a lämmergeier immediately, even at a great distance.

The raven (*Corvus corax*) is an even more familiar bird in Tibet than the lämmergeier. Although the Tibetan bird is the same species as the European raven, it differs from the latter in being usually larger. Ravens occurred at all the camps of the Tibet Frontier Commission, and where these were more or less permanent, the birds literally swarmed, disputing with mongrel dogs for the possession of offal. My own previous acquaintance with wild ravens was mostly acquired in Iceland. In that

country ravens are tolerably common, but they are so shy and wild that most of one's observations have to be made through the medium of field-glasses. It was, therefore, a pleasant surprise to me to find the Tibetan raven so utterly devoid of fear that one could stand within five yards of a bird, who, quite undisconcerted by such a close scrutiny, would confine his protest at the most to a croak or two, and resume his unsavoury repast with undiminished appetite. In spite, however, of the Tibetan ravens' tameness, they still retain the wariness common to all the *Corvidæ;* although in a land where firearms are rarely carried and where ravens are not molested, they cannot possibly associate the sight of a gun with danger to themselves. I found them apparently fully alive to my fell designs whenever I went after them "on business." As usual, with this species ravens in Tibet are early breeders, I found a nest containing young birds on the 6th of April, at an elevation of about 15,000 feet. The inhabitants of Lhasa keep several species of birds in captivity; considering what excellent pets ravens make, I was rather surprised to see no tame ones there.

The Himalayan griffon vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) is another common bird occurring up to the greatest altitudes. The wonderful rapidity with which numerous vultures appear about a dead animal (although a few minutes before its death no more may have been visible than a solitary bird soaring high up in the firmament) is a familiar fact, but it nevertheless impresses one afresh each time that one witnesses it; especially is this the case among the bare mountains of Tibet, where such a large tract of country must be required to provide sufficient food for each bird.

Pallas's sea-eagle (*Haliaëtus leucoryphus*), a large fulvous-colour bird, with a whitish forehead and a broad white band across the tail, was also somewhat numerous, and, in the plains of Gyantse and Lhasa, the black-eared kite (*Milvus melanotis*) abounds. A pair of these kites built their untidy nest on a tree standing in the garden of the house in which the Commission was living at Gyantse. This house was under a daily bombardment from the guns of Gyantse jong for over two months, and the kites' nest was directly in the line of fire. Although jingal balls were whistling through the leaves, or striking the branches, of the tree for many hours on almost every day, they

scarcely disturbed the kites in the least, and the latter successfully reared their young.

Of the smaller *Falconidæ*, sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*), hobbies (*Falco subbuteo*) and kestrels (*F. tinnunculus*) * were all fairly common; a few kestrels spent the winter at Tuna, but their numbers were largely reinforced by migrants in the spring. Three species of owls occurred, among them, the large eagle-owl (*Bubo ignavus*), which is rather common at Lhasa. In the spring hosts of migratory birds appeared. Thrushes were represented by the red-throated ouzel (*Merula ruficollis*)†, on its way to breeding grounds in higher latitudes, but most of the following birds remained with us until the cold weather set in: Redstarts (*Ruticilla rufiventris* and *R. hodgsoni*) were particularly numerous, as were also hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), willow-warblers (*Phylloscopus affinis*), rosefinches (*Propasser pulcherrimus* and *Carpodacus severtzovi*), cinnamon sparrows (*Passer cinnamomeus*), and several species of wagtails. The resident sparrow of Southern Tibet is the common European tree-sparrow (*Passer montanus*). This bird abounds even in places which, from the total absence of trees, would apparently prove quite unsuitable; however, the bird accommodates itself to circumstances and occurs in all the Tibetan villages.

The horned lark (*Otocorys elwesi*) is another common resident species, but is only met with in the bare, treeless tracts of country, and retires to the mountains and higher passes to breed. The same applies to the large calandra lark (*Melanocorypha maxima*), whose melodious call-note became very familiar to us.

Skylarks (*Alauda arvensis*) abound from Gyantse to Lhasa; swifts (*Cypselus apus*) ‡ and sand-martins (*Cotile riparia*) § occur along the well-watered valleys, and swallows (*Hirundo rufula*) and crag-martins (*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*) everywhere.

Flocks of red-billed choughs (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*) frequented the whole of the country that we visited. This is the same bird as the Cornish chough, but it differs from the British species in being of a larger size. As they do not feed on carrion, it is difficult to imagine what food such large numbers find in winter in the bare frozen country round Tuna. Magpies (*Pica bottanensis*)

* *Cerchneis tinnunculus.*
† *Turdus ruficollis.*
‡ *Cypselus pekinensis.*
§ *Clivicola riparia.*

are very common at Gyantse and Lhasa. They very closely resemble the British magpie (*P. rustica*), but are distinguishable from the latter by having the rump entirely black; they are also somewhat larger birds.

As might be expected snow-finches (mountain-finches) are well represented in Tibet. Three species (*Montifringilla blanfordi*, *M. ruficollis* and *M. adamsi*) spent the winter with us at Tuna. Though there was literally nothing for them to eat there, except the scanty seeds of coarse grasses, they kept in excellent condition, even during the severest weather.

The Tibetan twite (*Acanthis brevirostris*) is also very common and very similar in appearance and habits to the European bird.

No cuckoos were met with; this is rather strange since several species, including the familiar *Cuculus canorus*, are common in summer up to high altitudes in the Himalayas. The wryneck (*Iynx torquilla*), known in many parts of England as the "cuckoo's mate," occurred in small numbers at Lhasa, early in September. It was no doubt migrating then, as it is a regular winter visitor to the plains of India.

The blue-hill pigeon (*Columba rupestris*), the differences between which and our own blue rock (*C. livia*) are very trivial, is the common pigeon of South Tibet. Although the Tibetans are not pigeon fanciers, this bird lives in a semi-domesticated state in all the villages. Oddly enough, the "snow" pigeon (*C. leuconota*), a handsome pied bird, was only seen at comparatively low altitudes in the Chumbi Valley.

There is a good stock of game birds. In the Chumbi Valley monals (*Lophophorus refulgens*) and blood pheasants (*Ithagenes cruentus*) were very numerous, and on the mountains and high table-lands the fine Tibetan snow cock (*Tetraogallus tibetanus*) was almost equally common. Snow partridges (*Lerwa nivicola*) were decidedly local in their distribution, but the Tibetan partridge (*Perdix hodgsoniæ*) was plentiful almost everywhere. It is an excellent bird for the table, but is too confirmed a "runner" to afford much sport. From the sportsman's point of view, one of the best birds is the sand-grouse (*Syrrhaptes tibetanus*), which also occurred in considerable numbers.

The Hram or Bam tso and Kala tso, lakes on the road between Tuna and Gyantse, were covered in the spring with innumerable geese and ducks, resting, for the most part, on their

way to their breeding grounds. The only goose shot and positively identified was the bar-headed goose (*Anser indicus*). This bird breeds on a lake near Kamba jong, on the Kala tso, and probably on several other of the larger lakes in Southern Tibet. Indeed, at Lhasa, wild goose's eggs were offered for sale in the bazaar, but only in small numbers. The ruddy sheldrake, or Brahminy duck (*Casarca rutila*), breeds all over the country, making its nest in any sort of hole or hollow in the vicinity of some small stream. This bird, owing to its extreme wariness, is a perfect curse to the sportsman in India who is in quest of wild-fowl. While worthless itself for the table, and consequently seldom shot at, it alarms all the better ducks by its loud call, and by being the first to take to flight. It was therefore quite novel to note how tame the Brahminy was in Tibet. There, when nesting, or about to nest, it scarcely took any notice of one, merely waddling off a few yards if approached too closely. Another duck, which breeds certainly at Lhasa and probably elsewhere, is the white-eyed pochard (*Nyroca ferruginea*). "Flappers," still unable to fly, were shot at Lhasa at the end of August. The other ducks that were met with in Tibet were the mallard (*Anas boscas*), the pintail (*Dafila acuta*), shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*), common teal (*Nettium crecca*), Garganey teal (*Querquedula circia*) and tufted pochard (*Fuligula nyroca*). Goosanders (*Mergus castor*)* were also common from the Chumbi Valley to Gyantse.

Two species of snipes, the large solitary snipe (*Gallinago solitaria*) and the pintail snipe (*G. stenura*), were obtained; the latter only at Lhasa, where it was very scarce. At Lhasa also redshanks (*Totanus calidris*), moorhens (*Gallinula chloropus*) and coots (*Fulica atra*) occurred in large numbers.

The Tibetans are apparently not very observant people. I asked an official of high rank at Lhasa, who had held appointments at several places in Tibet, how many species of birds he had seen. He was silent and thoughtful for a minute or two, while he counted off on his fingers those that he knew. He then replied that he knew of twelve kinds of birds, and had heard of, but had not seen, two others!

On the other hand, a few of the Tibetan names of birds imply some little observation of their appearance, size or habits. Thus the tree-sparrow is called "Kang-che-go-mar," or "the little

* *Merganser castor.*

house-bird with the red head"; "Pang-che," or "the little bird (that lives) on grassy hillsides," is Severtzoff's warbler (*Leptopœcile sophiæ*), and "Chi-u-teb-tok," or "the little bird as small as the top of one's thumb," is a willow-warbler (*Phylloscopus affinis*). The following names are very good onomatopoeic renderings of the birds' notes:—"Pu-pu-pu-shu" is the hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), and "Di-di-ku-ku" is the turtle dove (*Turtur orientalis*).

At Lhasa many birds are kept in captivity, the favourite cage-birds being larks, rose-finches and turtle doves.

FISH.

The streams and lakes of Southern Tibet are well supplied with fish. During the summer fishermen from Gyantse and Lhasa go as far as the Kala tso lake for the purposes of their trade. The fish that they catch vary in weight from about half to two pounds or more. They are split in two, like haddocks, and dried in the sun.

I collected several species, but they are at present awaiting identification. One fish, which furnished a good deal of sport to the anglers of the Commission and escort, is quite like a trout in colour and general appearance, but differs in wanting the small "adipose" fin. It was as good for the table as for sport.

Another fish of which we caught large numbers up to four pounds in weight in the Tsang-po and in the streams at Lhasa, is an ugly, slimy brute, with a flattened head and four long feelers hanging from the sides of the mouth. In spite of its repulsive appearance, it was a very excellent and welcome article of food.

REPTILES.

Of the reptiles, snakes (non-venomous) are said by the Tibetans to occur in the vicinity of the numerous hot springs, but I was not fortunate enough to come across any.

I collected several species of lizards: the most interesting was a large dark-coloured animal, which was often to be seen sunning itself on the rocky hillsides near Lhasa. Its body is remarkably flattened from above downwards, and is of a dark stone-grey colour, thickly marked with black, and a few large white spots. The largest that I secured measured sixteen inches in length.

AMPHIBIA.

I was requested by a distinguished Russian naturalist to keep a sharp lookout for newts, as little or nothing was known of these amphibians. I spent many hours in searching for them, in the most likely places, but I found none. Toads, also, seem to be quite wanting in Southern Tibet, but frogs of two or three species are very common. Owing, presumably, to the brevity of the Tibetan summer, the frogs are only just about able to get through their metamorphoses before the winter sets in, and tadpoles were still common in all the ditches and ponds at Lhasa at the end of August.

INSECTS.

To anyone possessing an acquaintance with British insects, the Tibetan ones seem quite familiar. The common butterflies at once recall our "whites," "blues," "tortoiseshells" and "fritillaries," and various beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, ants, bees and dragonflies are strongly suggestive of our own.

Mosquitoes, of savage propensities, were very common at Lhasa, though they were not at all troublesome elsewhere. The extensive swamps and marshes around the city were, doubtless, responsible for these unpleasant creatures.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Hunting spiders were common everywhere in summer, but I saw no web-spinning ones. Scarlet "velvet mites" also abounded. A species of centipede, about an inch and a half in length, was obtained in the Brahmapoutra valley.

The Tibetans carry about on their persons a particularly luxuriant parasite fauna of the familiar types. As the lower classes of the inhabitants of Tibet do not appear to possess even the most rudimentary ideas on the subject of bodily cleanliness, this is by no means to be wondered at. Earthworms seemed to be very local in their distribution.

The general similarity, referred to above as existing between Tibetan and British insects, was noticeable too in the case of the common mollusks, which closely resemble the fresh water snails of an English pond.

APPENDIX B

SIR EDWARD MAUNDE THOMPSON has drawn my attention to the following extract from the Warren Hastings papers [British Museum. Additional MS. 29,233, f. 388]. It is a note by George Bogle upon the attitude he assumed towards the Tibetans and Bhutanese, and is not without interest as showing the kind of man Warren Hastings selected for his important commission to Tibet.

. . . . "I sometimes considered that the Character not only of the English, but of all the People of Europe depended upon me. This Idea, of being shown as a Specimen of my Countrymen has often given me a world of Uneasiness, and I dont know that I ever wished so heartily to have been a tall personable Man, as upon this Occasion. It was some Comfort to have Mr. Hamilton with me, and I left it entirely to him to give a good Impression of the Persons of Fringies. But from a national and perhaps excusable vanity, I was anxious also to give the People whom I visited, a favourable opinion of the dispositions of the English. The Hostilities in Cooch Beyhar had shewn them, to the Inhabitants of Bootan and Thibet, as a nation brave and warlike. My Business among them was meek and peaceful. In order to fulfill the Purpose of my Commission I had to gain Confidence and to conciliate Goodwill. With this View I assumed the Dress of the Country, endeavoured to acquire a little of the language & Manners, drank a Deluge of Tea with Salt and Butter, eat Beetle in Bootan, took Snuff and smoked Tobacco in Thibet, & would never allow myself to be out of Humour. If with this view also I have sometimes given presents which a parsimonious Economy might have

saved, and have thereby enhanced my Expences a few Thousand Rupees, the propriety or Impropriety of my Conduct may be easily appreciated, by weighing the Object that I aimed at against the Money which it cost me.

"Indeed the whole of my Expences (Servants wages excepted) are in a Manner formed of Presents. Even the Charge of travelling may be included under this Head. An order of Government supplied me with Coolies Horses and Accommodations. The best House in every Village was allotted me for my Quarters, and the best provisions which the Country afforded, were prepared for my supper. During the five Months that I lived in the Lama's Palace, I had Rice, Tea, Sugar, preserved Fruits, Bread, and dried Sheeps' Carcases in Abundance, and the whole Expence of living, for myself and Mr. Hamilton, during that Time, amounts but to about forty Rupees. The Presents, I gave to the Bootieas, were principally made in Money. Those to the Inhabitants of Thibet, in Coral, Broad Cloth, and other Articles. The different Genius of the two Nations required this distinction. The Ideas of the high Class of People in Thibet are more refined, and they with difficulty accepted even of those presents from a Stranger. The Bootieas are of a more sordid Disposition, and receive, with little Ceremony, whatever is offered to them. In return I received in Bootan, besides some Pieces of Silk, Blankets, and other woolen Manufactures, Fruits, Rice, Butter in such quantities that I could have set up as a Tallow Chandler, and a parcell of unmatched Tanyan Horses —which have almost ruined me. In Thibet I received Gold Dust and Talents of Silver, from the Lama and his Officers, for all which, except some small Bulses* which I gave away in the same Manner as I got them, I have given Credit in my Accounts.

"I have stated my Charges fairly. The Money which I expended was for the Honour of the Company, and to facilitate the Object which I aimed at, and thus I submit the Accounts to your Judgement."

* *Bulse*—package of diamonds or gold dust (Oxford Dictionary).

APPENDIX C

AN account given to the Prince of Tuscany of a conversation held with a Father of the Order of the Jesuits (*Grueber*), who had come to Florence from China, January 31st, 1665. [Br. Mus. Add. MS. 16,506, f. 277 *et seq.*]

Then advancing further into the country of Tangut, he arrived at Retink, a district fairly well populated in the realm of Barantola, and finally in the real kingdom of Barantola, the royal town of Lassa. The present king is called Tena, and is descended by very ancient origin from the Tartars of Tangut. His residence is in a castle built according to European ideas, on a very high hill; it is the royal palace, and is called Butala. It has four stories, and the architecture is fair. The court is very large, and there is an incredible luxury in the dresses of cottons and gold brocades. Except for this the nation is extremely dirty, as they have a law, for men as well as for women, not to wear shirts, to sleep on the ground, to eat raw meat, and never to wash either hands or face. They are, however, pleasant and friendly to strangers.

One sees the women in the town just as other Tartar women, and contrary to the Chinese custom. The king's brother is called Lama Congiu. This is the Mufti, or, we may say, the High Priest of the Tartars, who worship him as God. They believe that he is the brother of the first king, although they call him successively the brother of all the kings, and hold that occasionally he must die and be born again, and they say that this is the seventh time that he has come to life again since the creation of the world.

This belief is kept up in the people by the astuteness of the king, and fostered by the few persons admitted to the secret, who so manage the affair that even the dirty rags of this divinity are immensely sought after by the highest in the kingdom, and happy is he who obtains the most flowered and embroidered piece. They wear them on their breasts as a relic. Except by their devotees they do not allow themselves to be seen by anyone.

From Barantola he went to Nekpal, etc.

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